

[Sri P. Ramamurthi] [12th December 1952]

a way which reminds us of a Tamil proverb பட்டுக்கோட்டைக்கு என்ன வழி என்றால், கொட்டைப்பாக்கு பத்து பணம், என்பதைப் போல. If the Ministers do not understand the question, it would be better if they get it translated and give proper answers instead of giving irrelevant answers."

MR. SPEAKER :—" As far as I am concerned, the Chair cannot interfere regarding the method of answering by the Hon. Ministers. But hon. Members can move a cut motion during the Budget discussion and press it to a division if they want it."

III.—GOVERNMENT MOTIONS.

(1) FOOD SITUATION IN THE STATE—*cont.*

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" On a point of privilege, Sir. An important topic like the food situation in the entire State is being discussed to-day; but I find that none of the Members representing the Chingleput district has been given a chance to voice forth his feelings about the situation in that district. Does it mean, Sir, that there is no food problem in the Chingleput district? I find"

MR. SPEAKER :—" I cannot make any distinction between one district and another district. All that I do is to call Members who catch my eye. Mr. V. V. Ramaswami Nadar will speak now."

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" Why not at least one Member from Chingleput be allowed to speak, Sir? "

MR. SPEAKER :—" The Leader of the Opposition is going to speak to-day and the Hon. Chief Minister also will reply to the debate. There is not much time before us."

SRI K. VINAYAKAM :—" We are also equally important as the leaders, Sir."

10-30
a.m.

* SRI V. V. RAMASAMI :—" அவைத் தலைவர் அவர்களே, இப்பொழுது நமது சட்டசபையில் விவாதிக்கப்படும் பிரச்சனை யானது நாட்டிலுள்ள உணவு நிலைமையைப் பற்றி. இந்திய நாடு சுதந்திரம் அடைந்த பின்பு நமது நாட்டு மக்கள் தங்களுக்குத் தேவையான பொருள் களையும் பண்டங்களையும் எவ்வளவு தூரம் தாங்களாகவே உற்பத்தி செய்து கொண்டு தானே தங்களுடைய வாழ்க்கைத் தரத்தை உயர்த்த வேண்டிய வழிகளையும் அவர்கள் செய்து கொள்ளவேண்டும் என்ற உணர்ச்சி எங்கும் பரவி இருந்தது என்பது எல்லோருக்கும் தெரிந்த விஷயம். வெளி நாடுகளிலிருந்து இறக்குமதியாகும் உணவு பொருள்களை எவ்வளவுக் கெவ்வளவு குறைத்த அதன் மூலம் மிச்சப்படும் பணத்தைக்கொண்டு நாட்டின் நிதி நிலைமையை செவ்வனே வைத்துக் கொள்ளவேண்டும் என்பது நமது தலைவர்களுடைய விருப்பம் ஆகும். இந்த நிலைமையில் நமது நாட்டில் இருக்கும் உணவு பற்றுக்குறையை தீர்க்க வேண்டும் என்ற பொறுப்பு அரசியலாருக்கு மட்டும் இல்லை, மற்றும் எல்லா மக்களுக்கும் பெரிய வேதனையாக இருந்து வந்திருக்கிறது என்பது ஒப்புக்கொள்ள வேண்டிய விஷயமாகும். போர்முடிந்த சில ஆண்டுகளுக்கு முன்பு நாட்டில் இருக்கும் பற்றுக்குறையை நிவர்த்தி பண்ணுவதற்கு உணவு பங்கீட்டு முறையை அமுலுக்குக் கொண்டுவரும் வகையில் மக்களுக்கு பல முறைகளில் அவர்கள் உதவி செய்துவந்தார்கள். அப்படி அவர்கள் எடுத்துக் கொண்டது அவசியம் என்று கருதி நாட்டில் இருக்கக் கூடிய நிலங்களை லெல்லாம் அவரவர்களுடைய சக்திக்கு ஏற்றவாறு உணவு பொருள்களை

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பெருக்குவதற்கு முயற்சி செய்து அவர்களும் உணவுப் பொருள் உற்பத்தியையும் பெருக்கிக் கொண்டுவந்தார்கள். ஆனபோதிலும் அவர்களுக்கு காலாகாலத்தில் வேண்டிய விதை, எரு, மின்சாரம் போன்ற வசதிகள் இல்லாததோடு, கிணற்றிலிருந்து தண்ணீர் எடுத்துக் கொள்வதற்கு குழாயும் மற்ற கருவிகளும் கொடுத்து உதவ முடியாமல் போனதால் அவர்களுக்கு உற்சாகம் குறைந்தது என்று சொல்லவேண்டும். நிலைமை அப்படி இருந்தும் உணவுப் பற்றுக்குறையை நிவர்த்தி பண்ணுவதற்காக சர்க்கார் எடுத்துக்கொண்ட கொள்முதல் முறையினால் விவசாயிகள் எதிர் பார்த்த விலையைக் கொடுக்காமல் இருந்தால் விவசாயிகளுக்கு உற்பத்தியில் ஊக்கம் குன்றி அவர்கள் உணவு உற்பத்தியில் தங்களுடைய மனதைச் செலுத்தாமல் வணிக பொருள்களை விவசாயம் செய்வதில் அவர்கள் நாட்டம் செலுத்தினார்கள். ஏனென்றால் இந்தக் கடலை, புகையிலை, மிளகாய் முதலிய வணிக பொருள்களை வெளிநாட்டிற்கு ஏற்றுமதி பண்ணுவதால் அவர்களுடைய செலவுக்கும், உழைப்பிற்கும் ஏற்றவாறு வருவாய் கிடைக்கும் என்ற நிலை இருந்ததால் அவர்கள் அதில் நாட்டம் செலுத்த வேண்டிய தாயிற்று. மேலும் உற்பத்தியாகும் பொருள்களை அரசியலார் தங்களுடைய விற்பனை கடைகளுக்கு எடுத்துக் கொள்வதற்காக செய்த நடவடிக்கைகளால்லாம் அவர்களை தொல்லைக்கு ஆளாக்கியதினால் சர்க்காரின் மேல் அவர்களுக்கு வெறுப்பு வந்து இந்தத் தொல்லையிலிருந்து மீளுவதற்கும் வேறு வழிகளில் விவசாயத்தைப் பெருக்குவதற்கும் வணிக பொருள்களை உற்பத்தி செய்வதில் நாட்டம் செலுத்த வேண்டியதாயிற்று. மேலும் விவசாயிகள் எதிர்பார்த்த விலையை அரசியலார் கொடுக்காததாலும், அரசியலார் தங்களுடைய பங்கீட்டு முறையினால் வெளியிலிருந்து உணவுப் பொருள்களை வரவழைத்து மக்களுக்குக் கொடுக்கக் கடமைப்பட்டிருக்கிறார்கள் என்ற உணர்ச்சியினாலும் மக்கள் அரசியலாரின்மேல் பாரத்தைப் போட்டுவிட்டு அவர்களுக்கு எந்த விவசாயத்திலும் வருமானம் வருகிறதோ அதில் தங்களுடைய மனதைச் செலுத்தி வந்தார்கள். இந்த நிலைமை ஏற்பட்டதினால் வெளிநாட்டிலிருந்து உணவு பொருள்களை அதிகமாகக் கொண்டுவந்து மக்களுக்குக் கொடுக்கும்படியான பெரும் பொறுப்பு அரசியலாரிடத்தில் ஏற்பட்டுவிட்டது. ஆனால் இது அதிக நாள நீடிக்கவில்லை. பொதுநலத் தொண்டர்களின் கிளர்ச்சியின் பயனாக அரசியலார் கொண்டு வந்த பங்கீட்டு முறையை தளர்த்திக்கொண்டுவந்தனர். இப்பொழுதுள்ள சர்க்கார் நமது ராஜாஜி மந்திரி சபை வந்ததும் பூராவாகவும் இந்தக் கட்டுப்பாட்டை நீக்கி விட்டார்கள். அதை எல்லோரும் வரவேற்கிறோம். அதுவும் சரியாக நடந்து வருகிறது என்பதைச் சொல்லத் தேவை இல்லை. பொது மக்களும் இந்த முறையை வரவேற்கிறார்கள். உணவுப் பொருள்களை மக்களுக்குக் கொண்டுவந்து கொடுக்க வேண்டியது அரசியலாருடைய கடமை என்ற பொதுமக்கள் உற்பத்தியிலுள்ள உற்சாகத்தில் குறைந்துவிடக் கூடாது. தங்களுக்குத் தேவையான உணவு பொருள்களை தாங்களே உற்பத்தி செய்துகொள்ளவேண்டும் என்ற உணர்ச்சி மக்களிடத்தில் இருக்க வேண்டும். தன் காலிலேயே தாங்கள் நிற்க வேண்டும் என்ற உணர்ச்சி மக்களுக்கு இருக்கவேண்டும். இந்த கொள்முதல் முறையை எடுத்து விட்டு, பங்கீட்டு முறையையும் தளர்த்திவிட்டு இறுதியாகக்கொள்முதலையும் பங்கீட்டு முறையையும் ரத்து செய்தவுடனே குறிப்பாக இந்த புஞ்சை தானியங்களான கம்பு, கேப்பை, சோளம் முதலிய தானியங்களின் கட்டுப்பாட்டையும் தைரியமாக எடுத்துவிட்டார்கள். அதற்குக் காரணம் இந்த பருவ மழை உதவியாக இருக்கும் என்று அரசியலார் நம்பினார்கள். ஜூன் மாதத்தில் இந்த தென்மேற்கு பருவமழை வந்திருந்தால் எவ்வளவோ உபகாரமாக இருந்திருக்கும். அரசியலாரும் வெற்றி அடைந்திருப்பார்கள். எதோ நாம் எதிர் பார்த்ததற்கு விரோதமாக தென்மேற்கு மழை மோசம் செய்துவிட்டது. அடுத்தபடியாக வடசீமக்கு பருவமழையும் பிந்தி வந்ததோடல்லாமல் இறுதியில் பெய்யவேண்டிய இடத்தில் பெய்யாமல், பெய்த இடங்களில் விவசாயத்திற்கு பெரும் சேதம் விளைவிக்கக் கூடிய புயல் அடித்து மக்களும் மாக்களும் இடஞ்சுல்படும் நிலையை விளைவித்தது. அரசியலாரின் உணவு பற்றுக்குறை ஒரு பக்கம் இருக்க இப்பொழுது புயலினால் ஏற்பட்ட சேதத்திற்கு செலவு செய்ய வேண்டிய கவலைக்கும் இடமாகிவிட்டது.

[Sri V. V. Ramasami] [12th December 1952]

“அடுத்த படியாக பற்றுக்குறையை நிவர்த்திக்க வேண்டிய வேலை செய்ய வேண்டி இருக்க, எல்லா ஜில்லாக்களையும் பஞ்சப் பிரதேசமாக்கப் படவேண்டும் என்று ஒவ்வொரு மெம்பரும் சொன்னால் மக்களுக்கு திருப்தி அளித்து விடுமா என்பதைப் பார்க்கவேண்டும். அந்த மனப்பான்மையை பிரதிநிதிகள் மக்களிடத்தில் ஏற்படுத்தி விடக்கூடாது என்று எச்சரிக்கை செய்ய விரும்புகிறேன். பஞ்சப் பிரதேசமாக்கி விட்டால் ஒவ்வொரு பிரதிநிதிகளுடைய பொறுப்பும் கமிந்து விட்டது என்று நினைக்கக்கூடாது. மக்களிடத்தில் பீதியை உண்டாக்கக் கூடாது என்ற கடமை உணர்ச்சி மனதில் கொள்ளவேண்டும். இப்பொழுது ராமநாதபுரம் ஜில்லாவில் சொற்ப மழை கூட இல்லாமல் போய்விட்டது. அங்கெல்லாம் பயிர்கள் காய்ந்து அழிந்து போய் விட்டன. கலெக்டரும் நிலைமையை நன்கு அறிந்திருக்கிறார். அவர் கேட்கின்ற நிதி உதவியையும் அவர் திட்டமிடும் நிவாரண வேலைக்கு வேண்டிய செலவுகளையும் அரசியலார் தங்கு தடையின்றி கொடுத்தால் அதுதான் மக்களுக்கு திருப்தி தருமே யொழிய மற்றப்படி வீணாக பிரச்சினையை குழப்பி விடக்கூடாது என்று சொல்லிக் கொள்ள விரும்புகிறேன்.

“அடுத்தபடியாக இப்பொழுது என்ன செய்யவேண்டும் என்றால் இப்பொழுது தேவையான உணவு பொருளான அரிசியை உடனே கொண்டு வந்து கொடுக்கும்படியான ஏற்பாடு செய்யவேண்டும். பெரிய பெரிய திட்டங்களை இப்பொழுது எடுத்துச் செய்ய வேண்டியதில்லை. இப்பொழுது மழை இல்லாததால் கிணறுகளில் தண்ணீர் இல்லாமல் போய் விட்டது. கிணறுகள் தோண்டுவதற்கும் பிறவசதி செய்வதற்கும் கடன் மான்யம் கொடுத்து வந்தார்கள். இப்பொழுது அப்படிக் கொடுக்கவில்லை. அவ்விதம் தொடர்ந்து கொடுத்து வந்திருந்தால் மழை பெய்வதற்கு முன்பாக அங்கேயுள்ள ஏரிகளையும் கால்வாய்களையும் செப்பணிட்டு வைத்திருப்பார்கள். இது வரையிலும் மான்யம் கொடுத்து வந்து இப்பொழுது திடீர் என்று நிறுத்தி விட்டார்கள். கிணறுகள் தோண்டுவது என்றால் ரூ. 1,500; 2,000 செலவாகிறது. ஆனால் அதற்கு சர்க்கார் ரூ. 500 தான் கொடுக்கிறார்கள். அதனால் மக்களால் தோண்ட முடியவில்லை. இப்பொழுது மக்களிடத்தில் வாங்கும் சக்தி குறைந்திருக்கிறது, ஒரு கிணறு கூட தோண்ட முடியவில்லை. அதோடு மத்திய சர்க்காரிடமிருந்து உணவு பொருள்களைக் கொண்டு வருவதோடல்லாமல் மக்களுக்கு வேண்டிய எரு, விதை முதலியவைகளைக் கொடுப்பதற்கும் ஏற்பாடு செய்யவேண்டும். இப்பொழுது மக்கள் பெரிய நீர்த்தேக்கங்களையும் கால்வாய்களையும் கட்டுவதில் மனதைச் செலுத்திக் கொண்டிருக்கிறார்கள். நம் நாட்டிலுள்ள கண்மாய், கால்வாய்கள் போன்ற நீர்பாசன வசதிகள் உலகத்திலேயே வேறு எங்கும் கிடையாது. அந்தப் பணத்தை”

MR. SPEAKER :—“The hon. Member's time is up.”

SRI A. GOVINDASWAMI NAYAGAR :—“Sir, on a point of order கனம் சபா நாயகர் அவர்களே, இந்த உணவு பிரச்சனை மீது விவாகம் நடக்கும்போது, தென் ஆற்காடு ஜில்லாவில் உணவு பஞ்சம் இருப்பதால் அங்கு நியாய விலைக் கடைகளை நிறைய திறக்கவேண்டும் என்றும், போதுமான தானியம் மக்களுக்கு கிடைக்கும்படி ஏற்பாடு செய்ய வேண்டும் என்றும் ஒரு திருத்தம் கொடுத்திருக்கிறேன். அந்தத் திருத்தத்தை பிரேரேபிக்க வேண்டும் என்று முதலில் கேட்டேன். அதன்மேல் பிறகு பேசுவதற்கு அனுமதி கொடுக்கிறேன் என்று முதலில் சொன்னீர். இது வரைக்கும் எனக்கு அனுமதி கொடுக்கவில்லை. கட்சி தலைவர்களும் இப்பொழுது பேசுவதற்கு ஆரம்பித்து விட்டார்கள். என்னைப் பேசுவதற்கு அனுமதி கொடுக்காததன் காரணம் புரியவில்லை. ஆகவே நான் பேசுவதற்கு அனுமதி கொடுக்கும்படியாகக் கேட்டுக்கொள்ளுகிறேன்.”

MR. SPEAKER :—“This is not a point of order.”

* JANAB K. UPPI :—“Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday it was stated in this House by one of the Members that there were starvation deaths in Malabar and that they have been reported in the

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papers. Sir, I submit that the situation in Malabar is not so bad as to result in starvation deaths, because food is available, if not in large quantities, at least in quantities which are enough for living. Starvation deaths could not have taken place within these two or three days. If the correspondent of the paper which reported this news had seen two persons dying and thought that they were dying on account of starvation, I am only sorry for him; I must say it is only he who has allowed those people to die of starvation. So far as Malabar is concerned, the food position there after decontrol has not in any way deteriorated. I have to thank the present Government, in the name of the people of Malabar, for having taken this bold step and removed control which has been a canker in society. It has benumbed the hearts of people, it has demoralized everybody in some way or other. Sir, control was one of the greatest hindrances to the progress of the Grow More Food Campaign. In spite of the fact that the Government have spent so many crores over the Grow More Food Campaign, it has not been a success, because the human side of it, i.e., the will to cultivate, was wanting on account of the harassment and sufferings caused to the cultivator. The cultivator was actually reluctant to produce food on account of the existence of control; but, after decontrol, the incentive came back to the producer to produce more food, and every man who has a bit of land has begun to cultivate, and the effect has been marvellous. Again, after decontrol, prices in Malabar did not go up for a long time. Decontrol has produced another result. Foodgrains which were formerly going to the black-market in spite of procurement, are now coming out freely and are being sold at market prices throughout Malabar. You will be surprised to hear, Sir, that in some places the prices prevailing in fair price shops are greater than the market prices in the locality. That is the position after decontrol in Malabar. Unfortunately for us, the south-west monsoon did not come in proper time and the north-east monsoon was a failure again. So, at present there is some scarcity in the country. Still there is a steady market price now, while formerly there was no market price at all, and it was all any man's price, i.e., any man could demand any price for his grain, and most of it was sold only in the black-market. I must say that the quantity procured by the Government in Malabar last year was greater than the quantity procured in any one of the last several years, because control was removed and foodgrains freely came into the market.

“ Then, Sir, I have to say a few words about the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies. The life history of the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies is scandalous. The Government have in their possession sufficient information regarding the scandalous way in which the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies have been conducted. They know that embezzlements have been going on. There are also prosecutions pending before the courts in regard to many embezzlements, and people are now saying that these Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies must be called black-market societies. Yesterday somebody was saying that the agitation against the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies was being engineered or manoeuvred by people

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who are connected with the Civil Supplies Department or by big wholesale merchants. I submit, Sir, that such an allegation is mean and mendacious. Let us see how many societies have been superseded and taken over and conducted by the Government. My information is that out of about 108 societies, 84 societies have been superseded. Only a few of them have been conducted in a manner befitting a society. Six years ago, in 1946, we opposed, i.e., the Muslim League opposed the formation of these societies and as we anticipated, to-day, we find that most of these societies are used by people for enriching themselves by doing business in the black-market. Sir, it is high time that the Government looked into this matter.

“ Finally, Sir, let me hope that Government will not resort to control once again. If any such thing happens, I am sure it will be a great calamity for the country. So far as Malabar is concerned, decontrol came when the cultivation work was over. So, at present people are running to their lands with a view to cultivate them and grow foodgrains, and sure as anything, perhaps, next year Malabar, though not completely self-sufficient, will be able to meet at least half the quantity of her own food requirements. With these words, Sir, I support the motion moved.”

10-50
a.m.

* DR. K. B. MENON :—“ Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon. Minister for Finance, in opening the debate, took us through a historical survey of the food problem, and the picture that he paints does not give room for much chronic pessimism or abundant optimism. He however wants us to be on our guard, and therefore we should keep a watchful eye upon the shifting aspect of the food problem of this State. That means that in the acceptedly deficit areas like Malabar and Nilgiris, our watchful eye should be more vigilant and more careful. As far as Malabar is concerned, the problem is created mostly by two factors, one by the heavy population, and the other by the contour of the territory. She is one of the most thickly populated districts in the Madras State. She has a population almost twice that of any other district in the State crowded in an area which is very small because of the hills and dales, rivers and rivulets of Malabar. In spite of her fertility, she has not been able to feed her population for more than half the year. But this is not because of her lack of fertility or her incapacity to produce. The point I wish to make is that unless there is some kind of territorial specialization under which land is put to the best use for which it is suited, the output from land is bound to be limited. In some parts of Malabar, particularly in North Malabar, the paddy fields do not yield even half the cost of production and in some parts of South Malabar also paddy production is not an economic proposition. If there is to be some territorial specialization, wherein there will be a change in the kind of produce that is grown on the lands, there has to be considerable education, training and propaganda.

“ This takes me to the subject of the food habits of the people. Food habits of the people are created and to some extent inherited

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and to some extent determined by environments. The Government, I understand, have a scheme to put up model cafes and these model cafes may be used as effective media for educating the people on habits of food. My submission is that these model cafes should be opened not only in towns, but also in the mufassal for the people of the country live in the villages.

“ Another fact I would like to point out is that when we talk of food, we generally restrict ourselves to the production of cereals. Apart from this, we have large supplies of other kinds of food available in the country and these have not been satisfactorily tapped. I am referring to the food that the sea and the rivers offer to us. Madras State has a long coast line. Particularly as far as the district of Malabar is concerned, this is a very important factor because the fisheries on the Malabar coast is, according to Government reports, one of the best in the world. Even though it is one of the best in the world, if my information is correct, not even one modern trawler is plying in these waters. I wish the Government, particularly the Central Government, would give some speedy attention to this proposal so that the fisheries on the Malabar coast, as well as the rivers, tanks and lakes may be effectively used to supplement the food of the people of Malabar. The people of Malabar, Mr. Speaker, Sir, have the fish habit, they are fish-minded and if the figures furnished by the Government are to be a guide—I am speaking purely from memory—the per capita consumption of fish in Malabar almost tops the list, as far as India is concerned and takes a rank in the world and, if I remember aright, it is 56 pounds per capita. But owing to the rise in the cost because of the lack of proper supply, I cannot say that fish to-day is the poor man's food. Primitive methods of fishing coupled with the poverty of the fisherman, his ignorance, his lack of organization are responsible for the poor supply of fish on the Malabar coast.

“ Another factor to be borne in mind is the contour. It is largely responsible for the food problem of Malabar. It is not so much the scarcity of water, because in a normal year Malabar gets a rainfall of 125 inches, as it is a question of preserving the water for irrigational purposes. The rapids and rivers that flow on the hills bring water accumulated during the monsoon period from the hills down to the valleys and the problem is one of irrigating patches of fields which lie between the hills. If the rapids and rivers are properly dammed and bunded at convenient distances and convenient levels the water of the monsoon can be preserved and used by poor peasants. Also pumpsets may be fitted along the long-winding rivers like the Bharatham and the Thuttrapuzha which flow through the rice-producing areas of the district. These must be made available to the peasants so as to be used when there is scarcity of water. Mere talking of pumpsets is of no use; they must be made available to the people at small cost. As it is, the charge is rather high and unless electricity is made available, the cost of the pumpsets will be beyond the reach of the average peasant. I understand that the cost of an oil-engine driven pump

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is thrice more than an electrically driven pump. Therefore, as soon as possible Government should make electricity available to the people of Malabar, particularly to the rice-growing areas.

“ Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would like to submit that there are very many tanks that can be conveniently renovated and made use of. The orders of the Board of Revenue stand in the way of renovation of these tanks and I hope that the Government will look into it.

“ One word about the distribution of food through the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies. The existing system of distribution is expensive, inefficient and corrupt and therefore, should be got rid of. I have spoken about this question on the floor of the House and Members coming from that district have also spoken about how inefficient and corrupt they are and the changes that should be brought about in the societies. I feel, Sir, that these societies have outlived their times and no longer represent the people's movement because the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies in the mufassal are controlled by feudal interests and in the cities they are controlled by capitalist interests. Now that we have no more controls, there should be a change in the system and the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies may be abolished and new co-operative multi-purpose societies may be started and the function of managing these societies may be handed over to them. Because of the terrible and huge defalcations that have taken place, I plead with the Government to appoint a commission, or at least depute a high-ranking official to study the position of the Producer-cum-Consumer Co-operative Societies in Malabar and bring about some changes in their working. I feel that would prevent swindling of public moneys on the part of the Presidents and Secretaries of these institutions.”

SRI V. GOPALA GOUNDER :—“ Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Tamilnad Toilers Party I want to place my views on the matter now under discussion by the House. Every one of us knows about the present food scarcity in the State. The Hon. Minister for Food explained to the House with facts and figures the circumstances which led to the scarcity at present. I am glad he ended his speech with the hope that we can tide over this difficulty if we could take all steps consistent with the finances of the State. He said, in the beginning that this state of affairs was due to the failure of the monsoons. Everyone will certainly agree with him. Nobody is, however, to blame for the failure of the monsoons but yet there is one general complaint against the Government. I do not want to make that complaint against the present Government but it certainly must be laid on the Government that was then in charge because this state of affairs commenced almost four or five years back and knowing it they did not take proper steps to see that the acute distress was ameliorated to the extent expected by the people. There were certain laws in existence then and they were not properly administered by the Government. So far as the question of production is concerned, the failure of the monsoon is the

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main factor and there is also another factor for which the Government should share some responsibility. In those days the Government had the control over the distribution of manure, etc., through the Agricultural department and other co-operative societies. Though I do not want to go into these things of the past because they will not be very useful to us now, I just want to refer to them. The then Government allowed the existing state of affairs to continue and the manure and other agricultural implements were not distributed properly. I am not going to lay a charge against them on this score but I just want to show that as ameliorative measures were not taken to the extent expected of the Government and they allowed matters to drift, it has led to the present situation. It is our duty to forget all that has been done in the past, but I just wish to refer to the fact that because the Government left the people uncared for, the people developed a hatred towards the Government which was in existence then. The present state of affairs is only a natural consequence of this neglect.

“ Of course, the Hon. Minister has requested the House to suggest ways and means as to how best we can tide over the difficulties at present. I am therefore going to submit one or two suggestions now which, if feasible, the Government may adopt to get over these difficulties. So far as production is concerned, we are glad that Nature has somehow been kind enough to give us the necessary rains. Of course, this was the only complaint we were making till now. With irrigation facilities now available, it will be easier for the farmer to go on with his production. But the last six years of drought has left the farmer with no seeds or manure or money for getting on with his cultivation. I would therefore suggest to the Government that they will be pleased to distribute seeds, manure and other things by way of loans to the agriculturists through the Agricultural department, of course, consistent with the State's finances. I know, Sir, that sometime back loans were distributed to the farmers so that they could revive their cultivation. I suggest that similar loans may be given to the farmers to help them now. In this connexion, I wish to make one submission in regard to the distribution of these loans. I know personally that in some cases the distribution of loans was not done properly by the officers entrusted with this task. There were intermediaries everywhere and the farmer who applied for a loan got only 50 per cent of what he had applied for and the remaining 50 per cent went into other hands. I therefore submit, Sir, that the Government should issue strict instructions to the officers entrusted with this work to be very careful in the distribution of these loans.

“ The other suggestion is in regard to the distribution of food-grains. Of course, the Hon. Minister was saying that we cannot expect our requirements to be met for the present from outside but, I would submit, that from the quantity available the distribution could be done through fair-price shops. Of course, there are some fair-price shops now being run though their number is not up to the requirements of the public. These fair-price shop-owners are

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masters of themselves. There is no strict control over them and there is no one to see that these shops are run properly and distribution of the grains entrusted to them for sale is correctly done. Though I do not want to say it, I have still to point out that the Supply department officers in the past were mostly corrupt. I do not think that this state of affairs continues even now. Anyhow, I would request the Government to issue necessary instructions and see that this corruption is put an end to.

“ Sir, I wish to submit a word more about gruel centres. So far as my district of South Arcot is concerned . . . ”

MR. SPEAKER :—“ The hon. Member's time is over. I now call upon hon. Member, Sri B. Gangayya Naidu.”

* SRI B. GANGAYYA NAIDU :—“ Mr. Speaker, Sir, the food policy which has been placed before the House and which is being discussed on the floor of this Assembly is a vital problem and demands close consideration and attention. It is known to all of us that Madras State is deficit in food and that it is classified into two areas, namely, the delta areas and non-delta areas. In delta areas the tenants are provided with irrigation facilities which will help them to get the maximum yield and the Government is also doing its best for the maintenance and efficiency of the irrigation facilities. In spite of all these advantages that are conferred on these tenants they are not able to get the maximum yield from their holdings. There must be some reason for their not being able to do so. These holdings are not economic ones and are subject to subdivision and fragmentation which therefore leads to waste of capital and labour. Secondly, the social and economic condition of the tenant population is not very favourable because, whatever they have to purchase, whether it be agricultural implements or chemical manures, they have to do so at a very high rate from the merchants. The third reason is that their mode of cultivation is still crude and primitive. No doubt, we are now having agricultural demonstrators in every taluk, and there is the District Agricultural Officer also whose duty it is to carry on propaganda among the ryots so that they may become enlightened in methods of scientific cultivation. In spite of all these facilities, the cultivation which is now being carried on by the peasants is still crude and we are therefore not able to get the maximum yield which we expect from these delta areas.

“ The fourth reason which is important and which is also far-reaching is the concentration of large tracts of lands under single individuals who cannot begin and complete the agricultural operations on their holdings in time. The fifth reason is that these landowners who own extensive areas lease them out to poor tenants who are always at the sweet will and pleasure of these landowners who could get them evicted at any time they want. There is therefore no incentive on the part of the tenants. These are the reasons for our not having the maximum yield even from the delta areas.

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" A pernicious feature in our rural economy is that soon after they harvest their crops they sell them away to the local dealers at low prices for the purpose of paying the land revenue and discharging their debts. Subsequently they purchase paddy and other foodstuffs at high rates from the local traders. That represents the actual position. Even though the delta districts are surplus, yet the population feel that they are facing a deficiency of food.

" Now, Sir, the second approach to this problem is with regard to production in non-deltaic areas. In all non-deltaic areas, that is, districts which are dry, production depends upon certain factors, for instance, seasonal rains or monsoons, availability of manures, agricultural implements and irrigational facilities. Over and above all these things, seasonal rains play a great part in the rural economy of the ryot population. The non-deltaic areas of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam are frequently subjected to miserable famine conditions and though they have got rich resources, they have not been improved or developed. For instance, at the time of the discussion of the Budget proposals I have repeatedly brought to the notice of the Government that there are certain irrigation systems in Visakhapatnam district—in Viravalli there is Arundale Dam over the river Sarada and a dam over Konam—and if these two schemes are completed, it will solve 50 per cent of the food problem in the Visakhapatnam district. But the Government did not pay any heed to our request. There are also many other minor irrigation works which, if completed, would meet 50 per cent of the food deficit in Visakhapatnam district. That is the position of the district with regard to food. 11-10 a.m.

" Then, Sir, last year, in the two districts of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam the crops had been fair and people did not bother themselves about foodstuffs till the end of August 1952. This year the seasonal conditions are not favourable to the ryots and most of the lands in Viravalli, Yellamanchili and Narasapatnam taluks are lying fallow. All the lands fed by river water were cultivated in the first and second weeks of October, but subsequently the crops have withered away. That is the present position of the crops in the Visakhapatnam district. Sir, the people belonging to the district, mainly those in the Narasapatnam Division, are confronted with famine conditions, starvation and death. In order to alleviate the distress of the people of that division, I suggest to the Government to take certain steps in order to wipe out famine conditions that are existing in the Narasapatnam Division, that is in Viravalli and Yellamanchili taluks. I would suggest that the Government should first declare the Visakhapatnam district as a famine area and immediately start famine relief works in the Narasapatnam division, particularly in the Yellamanchili and Viravalli taluks. Secondly, I would suggest the starting of relief shops in the places where ration shops existed during the time of informal rationing. Thirdly, I would suggest that Government should grant long-term loans to the ryots belonging to the Visakhapatnam district.

" Sir, one other suggestion which I would like to place before this honourable House is that the Government should allow these

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two districts of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam to import paddy and seeds from other districts so that they may carry on their agricultural operations for the next year."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The hon. Member's time is up."

* SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was one of those who welcomed decontrol. Madras State generally makes history and leads the rest of the States and true to its tradition it made history in the matter of decontrol which led the rest of India to introduce decontrol. Decontrol came as usual, under the leadership of Rajaji whose name has gone down in the history of the Madras State as having given the lead in many matters of public importance. Decontrol is a gift to us by the present Government. Nobody in this House wanted decontrol in the sense they passed a formal resolution or made a formal approach to the concerned Ministers. I welcomed decontrol although I knew that the supply was not in a position to cope with the demand. Yet, I welcomed it because decontrol has concered the ultimate right of man to live, to choose his food, buy whatever he wanted and to eat whatever quantity he liked. The life of the people had been demoralized by many years of control where the officials of the Supplies department had exploited, harassed and humiliated our people. Therefore, when decontrol came, people heaved a sigh of relief, thanks to the present Government. When I put a few questions on the floor of this House regarding certain matters which were just and proper before decontrol but which turned out to be unjust and improper after decontrol, the Hon. Minister for Food either failed to catch my point or ignored it. I am still nursing a grievance against him. My point is, decontrol was confined to non-statutory areas and in those non-statutory areas where market was open people could afford to buy any amount, they were allowed 2 to 3 oz. in fair-price shops and in the towns where decontrol did not come, they were given 7 oz. It was so because people in towns were not in a position to buy in the open market, whereas people in the villages were in a position to buy in open market. It was only right and proper that some discrimination and disparity should exist. But, now when conditions have become the same all over after decontrol, both in towns and rural parts, I do not know why this disparity and why this discrimination should exist. If at all there should be discrimination, it should be favourable to the villagers only. I feel that people in the villages have a right to be favoured with regard to matters of food. People in the towns being in a position to command monetary facilities are able to buy not only cereal, but even non-cereal food. Again a man in the town requires less of physical energy than a man in rural parts. Now, taking the consumption of food as a whole, people in towns consume at the rate of 10 to 20 oz. of food on an average per day, whereas people in rural parts, on account of their low purchasing power, are confined only to the fair-price shops where they get only 2 to 3 oz. So, Sir, the whole thing must be changed and if the Government are not in a position to reverse the order in favour of the rural parts, I only plead that the whole thing must be equated so that

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people in the rural parts get the same quantity that is given to people in towns. While we were struggling for food some sudden bulk release of milo stocks took place in Pudukkottai. Quite a large stock of milo had been reserved by a few stockists and all of a sudden one dead of night an order for a consignment of milo was flown from Tiruchirappalli to Pudukkottai and thousands of bags were sent out to Pudukkottai. That is the sort of food administration we are having. The people on the spot knew the consequent effects, but no time was allowed for representation. The whole thing is a hot-bed of scandal. Of course, later on the only visible effect of this rush was that people had been deprived of their legitimate food. A few merchants with the goodwill of the officials combined to make money at public suffering. I therefore appeal to the Minister for Food to order a departmental enquiry into the milo affairs in Pudukkottai. I hear that though a few merchants, as well as the co-operative institutions, all of whom were entrusted with the distribution of food, in an equal degree, have been responsible for black-marketing, only the private merchants' licences have been suspended, whereas the co-operative societies are allowed to continue. As a matter of fact, the sphere of distribution of the co-operative societies has been enlarged on account of the suspension of licences of private parties. I do not know why the co-operative societies alone should be given favoured treatment and not the others, while as a matter of fact both the merchants and co-operative societies committed the same offence and so both should be subjected to the same severe treatment. On the other hand, the worst type of treatment should be meted out to the co-operative society because most of the money which they are allowed to operate on is being contributed by the Government. It is a public institution and it is a sort of semi-controlled Government institution and it should therefore behave much better than even private individuals or private merchants whose motive is only profit. Instead of that, co-operative institutions have been favoured and private merchants have been suspended. I want a departmental enquiry into this matter. It has also come to my notice that certain officials from Tiruchirappalli came to Pudukkottai in the night, got the release orders served on them and transported the bags that very night. The result is that the poor people of Pudukkottai had to go without milo for quite a long time. When the Hon. Chief Minister visited Pudukkottai, some representations were made to him and he was kind enough to order the despatch of some quantity to Pudukkottai. But that was not enough to meet the needs of all the people in the area. I would even suggest to the Government to buy less of rice or paddy and concentrate more on the purchase of milo which is the poor man's food. Milo should be distributed freely and copiously all over, not only through fair-price shops but also through the open market.

11-20
a.m.

"With regard to the receipt of milo, I understand that only those who were having ration cards in 1951 are allowed to take milo from fair-price shops and not others. Those people who were in possession of grains in 1951 could not have obtained cards, because there was no necessity for them. But if they are no longer

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in possession of grains and they have no stock, they have to depend only on fair-price shops. It is but proper that such people also should be allowed to draw from the fair-price shops.

"I understand that the cardholders who have lost their cards are not able to get substitute cards promptly. The procedure seems to be that the application for a substitute card has to be made to the Commissioner of Civil Supplies or some other officer very far away and he has to sanction the application. This procedure takes a long time. What is a poor man who has lost his card to do in the interval? Should there not be some provision made like the issue of temporary cards for the interval between the making of an application and its scrutiny and sanction?

"A friend of mine from Andhradesa has brought to my notice an injustice. He was asked by the Agricultural Department to undertake cultivation of seed paddy. A public spirited man he was, and he readily acceded and cultivated seed paddy according to the methods prescribed by the Agricultural Department. It cost him Rs. 150 per acre to grow seed paddy. The Agricultural Department wanted him to supply a further 8 bags of paddy and evidently he undertook to supply that quantity. Now, the procurement officials want him to supply 8 bags under the levy system. When the total output itself is only about 15 bags as per Government I cannot understand how officials of two different departments of Government can ask him to part with 16 bags of paddy. Even assuming that there has been some mistake in the estimate of output, should we not allow for the retention of some paddy for the subsistence of the person who cultivated seed paddy for supply to the Agricultural Department in a spirit of service?"

MR. SPEAKER :—"The hon. Member has one more minute."

* SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—"If he had not fallen a victim to the Agricultural Department, he could have cultivated ordinary paddy where the cultivation expenses come to only Rs. 75 per acre and he need not have cultivated seed paddy where the cultivation expenses come to Rs. 150 per acre. Is this the reward for the spirit of public service he has shown? Should he not be allowed the retention of some paddy for the maintenance of himself and his family instead of being pounced upon by two sets of Government officials in a Shylockian spirit and asked to surrender the entire stock?"

"The Hon. Speaker says that my time is up. Decontrol is a gift to us by the present Ministry and it is not my purpose to look the gift horse in the mouth. I pointed out some defects in order to make the teeth of the gift horse perfect and above blame. Our young Food Minister, who has come into office for the first time, has been bravely struggling with the food problem. The Food Portfolio has proved the graveyard of many an experienced, able and tried politician. Our Hon. Food Minister has been carrying on well and let us stand by him."

* SRI T. VISWANATHAM :—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is not easy to say all that we want to say within the short time allotted

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to us. Although you were pleased to give me half an hour, I consider it very inadequate. The Hon. Food Minister took more than an hour in initiating the debate and in the reply he is likely to take much more time. Anyway, I will not go in great detail. I want to submit that the conditions in this State are the accumulated result of the neglect of the past five or six years in particular, leave alone the neglect of some decades prior to that. My contention is that steps which should have been taken within the last five years were not taken by the Government either at the Centre or in the State. I blame nobody in particular; I blame no party in particular, but I blame only our own fate and the fate of the innocent millions of this country. I feel that the Government have not understood the urgency or the seriousness of the problem at all even now. The Planning Commission took two years to produce the Five-Year Plan, and till another nine months more, it will not be able to formulate any plan for increased food production in this State. Three years are going to elapse before the Commission is able to come to any conclusion. If there was any Planning Commission which felt the urgency of the needs of the food situation in this State, if there was any Central Government or any State Government which felt the urgency, things would not have moved in this very leisurely way. The Planning Commission has just included some schemes in the Supplementary Plan. But schemes for utilizing the Krishna waters have not yet been formulated. The matter is still under discussion and the Commission wants nine months more to come to a conclusion as regards the plan for the full use of the vast unused waters of the Krishna river which has always been inviting Government experts to come and utilize them. The river has always extended its welcome in wave and bubble, song and foam and has been saying: 'Come and use me. I will give food not only to the area through which I am passing. I will wipe out the entire deficit in the State'. But the minds and ears of the Government are closed. They are not responsive; they run after phantoms and delusions!

"As I said, it is as the accumulated result of the neglect in the past that the whole State has become famine-stricken. The cry of shortage of food has been heard not only from the Members representing districts like Cuddapah, Kurnool, Bellary, Anantapur and Chittoor, but also from the Members representing areas which are declared self-sufficient or surplus. The upland areas of the Godavari district, where there is the mighty Godavari Dam, are also in the same position as Cuddapah, Kurnool and Chittoor. The dry areas of Coimbatore and North Arcot districts are also in a similar position. For the matter of that, is there any district from which the cry has not come that a large part of it has been famine-stricken? Without going further into the matter, I submit that this Government must wake up at least now and feel the urgency.

11-30
a.m.

"As long as we get the rice that we want and as long as our families get what we want, probably we do not feel the urgency. The Public Works Department does not co-ordinate its work with

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the Food Department, and as long as the Agriculture Department does not co-ordinate with these two departments, it is impossible for us to get along. The engineers are a very slow-moving machinery. They investigate a scheme not in one or two years. They take twenty to thirty years for gestation. Even for the famous Krishna-Pennar Project, which is as old as 1903 they took three years more to produce a scheme which has now been greatly condemned by great engineers. But why did they do so? They did so because they did not feel the urgency of the food problem. They did not know where the water was running. They went on mooning as it were, and they produced a scheme. It was re-examined; several questions have been put as to the recommendations of that Technical Committee which examined it. But we have not got replies from the Government. The Planning Commission has not yet published the scheme. Only to-day, I asked the Public Works Minister to say what are the schemes that have been recommended by the Government of Madras for inclusion in the Supplementary Plan of the Planning Commission. I put this question not to lay on this Government the blame for all the previous neglect. But I put the question to know from this Government whether they felt the urgency of the food problem, and what steps they were going to take. What did the Hon. Minister say? In a leisurely way, he said, knowing full well that the entire money allotted to the Madras State under the Five-Year Plan is Rs. 140 crores and in the second Supplementary Plan of the Central Government the money allotted is Rs. 40 crores, that the Krishna-Pennar Stage I, Vaigai, Gandikota, Amaravathy Reservoir, Kanhirapuzha Reservoir, Sattanur Project, Budameru Reservoir, Krishnagiri Reservoir, Grow More Food and Minor Irrigation Projects, Ramapadasagar Stage I, etc., have been recommended to the Planning Commission for inclusion in the Supplementary Plan. Every scheme that one can conceivably think of has been recommended for inclusion. I ask whether a Government with a full sense of responsibility would give a list of all the available schemes to be included in, and executed under, the Five-Year Plan to wipe out the deficit of the State in rice? Apparently the Government are not serious. In reply to my question, the Government said 'Krishna-Pennar Stage I'. What is that stage? It is seen from the answer what the present Government are considering. Sir, I expected, if I may be pardoned for saying so, some sense of responsibility when my question was answered to-day. When already the Technical Committee has made certain recommendations and those recommendations were considered by this Government and forwarded to the Planning Commission, and engineers from here went and discussed these matters—in a day or two they are going to publish their recommendations—what did the Public Works Minister say? He simply said that this Government sent their recommendations in August 1951. This is the answer which he gives to-day, the 12th December 1952, totally ignoring all the intervening events. I am only pointing this out to you to show that this Government have not yet understood the seriousness of the problem. Of course the Hon. the Food Minister is very particular, because if he has got certain

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supplies, he wants to distribute them as well as he can. That is all his lookout. The Hon. the Public Works Minister has not been co-operating with the Food Minister. I am not saying this by way of complaint against him or to defend, the Hon. Minister Subramaniam for his inability to come to the rescue of the starving millions of the people. What I mean is that the whole system is so bad, and there is no sense of responsibility anywhere. Nobody wants to take responsibility. If this Government are serious, they must take only schemes which will wipe out our deficit in 2, 3, or 4 or 5 years at the most. There is no use of giving out a long list, and flinging it on the face of the Commission, saying, 'do what you like'. There is one other point. In regard to the Krishna-Pennar Project, I wanted to put supplementary questions, but I had not the time to put them. Discussions have been going on about this scheme. Who were the engineers that were sent by this Government for discussions? Was the Chief Engineer deputed to the Engineers' Conference either in Hyderabad or in Delhi? My information is that he has not been sent. Who is it that will impress upon the Central Government and the Planning Commission the urgency of our food problem? The real food problem in our State, as everybody knows, is not the problem of distribution. It is the problem of production and increased production in the quickest possible time in the most economical manner possible. Engineers have always been saying that we must throw dams on rivers where there is plenty of water, and which is now going to waste. If we throw some dams on rivers at the lowest reaches instead of allowing the water to go into the sea, and thus make attempts to conserve water, we can convert single crop lands into double crop lands. Some engineers suggested the construction of these dams and as a result they got into disfavour of the Madras Government. They had to get away to Delhi. This is the way in which things were being done here. The Public Works Minister said that he had recommended the Krishna-Pennar Stage I Scheme for increased production of food. What is that Stage I, he was not clear. The Government sent that recommendation in August 1951 according to him. But the present recommendation is different. The Khosla Committee, to meet the needs of Rayalaseema area in particular, have recommended a totally different scheme. They have recommended the remodelling of the existing Kurnool-Cuddapah canal to serve the famine-stricken areas of Rayalaseema. Has this been included in the scheme? They have included the excavation of Kavali, Kandukur, and Krishna-Pennar Project, Stage I, to secure quick and increased production of rice. I want to know from the Government whether these schemes have been included in the present recommendation? The Technical Committee advised the construction of a high dam on the Krishna at Nandikonda in the first stage itself. I want to know whether the Government have taken any steps in regard to this. Whether they agreed with this recommendation or disagreed, or whether they sent their Chief Engineer or other engineers for discussions upon this point with the Planning Commission, I want to know. They have said that canals on both banks of the Nandikonda project should be

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excavated to irrigate the dry areas of Guntur and Nellore, and areas south of Pennar up to Madras. That is the first stage of the project which the Technical Committee recommended to the Planning Commission. What have this Government done? While talking of the food problem, I certainly sympathise with the Food Minister who is faced with the problem of distribution. I know his difficulties. When there is a deficit, there is very great difficulty in distribution. When Government take the responsibility for distribution, the difficulty is even more. But I am asking whether the Irrigation Department of this Government has been co-operating. It is not co-operating. All our plans of control, de-control, or re-control or zonal system will not help us unless we feel the urgency of increased production. What are the original recommendations to the Planning Commission? They recommended the inclusion of schemes which will give an yield of 2.7 lakh tons of rice. Yesterday the Food Minister said that our deficit was usually running between 3½ lakh tons and 5 lakh tons. What is the use of our plans if they are aimed at a target of only 2.5 million tons of rice? This was all that was provided in the Government's first recommendation to be included in the Draft Plan. The supplemental plan is really no plan, because the Government have included all schemes only to satisfy all the Members, before elections. Really this is strange. We should not look at it from the point of view of party politics.

11-40
a.m.

" If the Central Government have appointed a Planning Commission, we must have some State Commission also and that Commission must be kept aloof from party and power politics. It must be a self-propelling machine and it must prepare a plan. It must start its work and it must continue it, whatever parties may be in power. Parties may come and go, but the Planning Commission must remain and the execution of irrigation projects must continue. Nothing of this kind has been done. Project after project is simply shilly-shallied and we are now in this sorry state. I have received a telegram from East Godavari describing the conditions there. Will anybody believe that in Godavari there could be famine? But yet it is there. In the upland taluks of Krishna, there is famine. The telegram reads as follows :—

' Godavar river failed June, July, August, tail-end coast villages almost total failure of crops upland villages. Pray plead exemption of levy.'

Apart from production, now there is the levy system. All that these people are saying is, 'Save us from this levy because all the crops have failed'. There is not sufficient food for going round. If only we took sufficient interest in time and converted all the single-crop areas and the delta areas into double-crop areas, we would have been able to make our State self-sufficient. But we did not do it. I do not blame this Government now. I only want that the attitude shown in the answer given by the Hon. Sri Ranga Reddi must change forthwith, if the Government want any co-operation from us. (Interruption.) You do not recommend but the hon. Gentleman comes and says with all seriousness that he has recommended a dozen projects. We must be bent upon more food production.

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The Hon. the Food Minister must know why I am saying these things. We must be more serious and push up those plans which will easily give us the largest amount of rice and at places where there are land and water available. Therefore, the question of deficit, which has been long-standing, cannot be solved unless we become more businessminded and seriousminded, in this matter, and feel the urgency much more than we have done hitherto.

"I may also draw the attention of the Hon. the Food Minister to the fact that in certain years the Central Government gave us a good deal of money for certain purposes. In 1947-48 they gave us Rs. 625 lakhs, in 1948-49 they gave us Rs. 442 lakhs and in 1949-50 they gave us Rs. 500 lakhs. But what happened? This block grant also was not properly or fully spent. This Government had to surrender Rs. 6 crores out of it. If this sum of Rs. 6 crores had been put in my hands, I would have constructed a dam across the Krishna at Pulichintala and in three years, that is by now, I would have wiped out the deficit in the State. But the Government simply surrendered it. I submit hereafter such things should not happen. More seriousness must be attached to food production work. (Interruption by the Hon. Sri Subramaniam.) You are concerned only with food distribution; do not worry yourself."

MR. SPEAKER—"The hon. Member refers to the Hon. Minister and not to me."

* SRI T. VISWANATHAM—"Yes, Sir. I only mean the Hon. Minister and not you. You are connected with everything that happens in this House."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:—"I am also connected with everything here."

* SRI T. VISWANATHAM:—"Sir, I need not go further into these matters."

"Then, I come to the question of control and decontrol. Those who criticize the decontrol policy must clearly understand that neither was it there in 1948 nor is there now full decontrol. The results of the policy can be assessed only if there is real decontrol as against control. At present, there is only a modified form of control and any modified form of control is bound to show distortions, create scarcity pockets and push up the prices. I am one of those who always believed that we can have full controls if we can work them successfully and if we have got a full complement of honest officers and honest dealers to work them. If we do not have them and we cannot have them, then we must leave the matter to the people themselves. Only, we must give them more facilities to produce more and to transport their produce. We must give them more facilities to move their stocks from place to place wherever supplies are needed. The Government must do the one or the other. If they do either of these things, there will not be so many distortions. In this world where Governments are running and where all people do not have all kinds of freedom—nor

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is it desirable for everybody to have all kinds of freedom—there are bound to be certain distortions and imbalances in the distribution of the stocks available. There is no doubt about it. But the Government have to either completely control them or allow things to take their own shape, subject only to an overall or general control. Experience has proved that this Government cannot work the controls effectively. We have found, to our cost, that the Government were not able to manage this business. And rightly, if you, Sir, will remember, I had always been pressing on the floor of the House that the control system was bad and that at least we might have it in a modified form, by creating zones. When the zonal system was introduced, though late it was therefore to my satisfaction. But this was not the exact zonal system which I had in my mind. The only zone which was created with some sense of realism was the northernmost zone consisting of Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and East Godavari. If there is no failure of rain, it is a fairly self-sufficient area. That is why the distortions in that area are not so great as the distortions produced in other areas. But what have the Government done in Guntur and Rayalaseema? The surplus in Guntur is not enough to feed Rayalaseema completely. So, that zone was wrongly delimited. That is why the whole of Rayalaseema is now feeling the difficulty. This has produced reactions in other areas also. The big surplus districts of West Godavari, East Godavari and Nellore are combined with the central zone and all the stocks there which hitherto were going to feed the people of Rayalaseema area are now flowing southwards, with the result that even people in the areas where there was surplus production are suffering. Only to-day we find a newspaper report from Vijayavada that all the rice is being marketed southwards: it is bound to happen so; because, a wrong zone has been created. In fact, I have always been saying that all the twelve Telugu districts, excluding Madras, should be constituted into one zone. If that is done, I promise that we will not ask the Government to import one speck of grain for us. In the twelve Telugu districts we have got sufficient rice for us. Not only that. By a system of easy levy we shall give for the southern area one lakh tons extra. Let the Government leave us to ourselves. Then they will have a better advantage in the dispersal of their officers. They can concentrate their officers in the deficit areas. Then there will be no internal cross-movements and the wagon position will become easy. I have always been suggesting that in the southern areas also, the more acceptable position would be to create self-sufficient zones, as long as there are controls and to localize the deficit only to one or two zones. Then all the imports of food and the surplus food from the surplus areas can be carried straight to those zones. It will be easy of management and we need not spend Rs. 120 lakhs on the Civil Supplies Department."

(An hon. Member was talking with his neighbour in the Chamber.)

MR. SPEAKER :—" The hon. Member sitting in the front, if he wants to talk with his neighbour, must go outside and talk."

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* SRI T. VISWANATHAM :—“ Immediately after decontrol, about 4 lakh tons were frozen in the hands of procurement agents. The immediate result was prices shot up. One cannot think of buffer stocks in deficit States. Buffer stocks and deficit States do not go together. It is not possible to do it because there is always a running deficit and if we withdraw a large amount of rice from circulation altogether, what really happens is the prices are pushed up. For, more people have to go into the free market wherever rice is available, and offer more money and purchase it. If controls cannot be removed now, the only course is to re-align the zones into four self-sufficient areas and two deficit areas, and take all the surplus available in the surplus areas and import straight into the deficit zones. That will work better.

“ If my voice is to prevail, I would even say that Orissa, Central Provinces and Madras should be made into one zone. I would like to suggest to the Food Minister of the Government of India that the Central Provinces, Orissa and Madras States and also Travancore might be combined into one zone. If that is done, I give them a guarantee here and now that we will not bother the Central Government about imports at all. The whole zone will be self-sufficient, I have no doubt about that. The Central Government then will not need to worry about these States and they can very well attend to the food problems of the other States in India. If they listen to this advice of mine, they can lessen the hardships of the people. If, however, they do not listen to this advice, then I can only say that it is our misfortune to be ruled by them. 11-50 a.m.

“ Even now, according to the levy system, what has happened? It is a very heavy levy. I shall presently give some figures of paddy production per acre from the season and crop report relating to East Godavari, West Godavari, Guntur, Krishna and Tanjore districts, which are the places now affected by the levy order. They are as follows :—

East Godavari—1,400 lb. per acre.

West Godavari—1,400 lb. per acre.

Guntur—1,620 lb. per acre.

Krishna—1,170 lb. per acre.

Tanjore—1,487 lb. per acre.

Figures are taken from the Season and Crop report for 1949-50.

“ This shows that the yield of paddy from these areas is 1,400 lb. per acre. People may not know the exact pounds and ounces, but they very well know what the lands yield. A complaint therefore has been made that some difference has been made between Tanjore and Godavari delta areas. (Interruption.) The Hon. Food Minister may say that it is all due to linguistic prejudices. I may tell him that it is not so. Whatever he may say, things will be understood in a different way in a different context. But the fact remains that the production in both the areas is more or less the same. When we look at the procurement figures, we find that they only prove what we have been crying about on the floor of the House,

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viz., that there was greater and more intensive procurement in the Godavari area than in the Tanjore district. That is the real fact."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" No, no. The hon. Member's complaint is wrong."

(Hon. Sri C. Subramaniam and Sri T. Viswanatham were both seen standing.)

MR. SPEAKER :—" Order, order. Two hon. Members should not stand at the same time."

* SRI T. VISWANATHAM :—" I am sorry, Sir. I did not notice it. Otherwise, I would have sat down and would have preferred to hear the Hon. Food Minister, as he gives us food." (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKER :—" The hon. Member has only five more minutes."

* SRI T. VISWANATHAM :—" Sir, I have not even come half my way. Yet, when you ring the bell, I will close my speech and sit down. Because, I have been saying these things on a number of previous occasions. I am only trying to impress upon this Government the urgency of this matter. The Hon. Minister will say that this levy is based upon the procurement figures. Still, I say that even the procurement basis is wrong, because the yield per acre must be the basis. After going through the figures given in the season and crop report, I feel that when the yield is the same in two areas, the rate of procurement should also be the same in the two areas. Apart from that, the difference between the rates in one delta and another is very great. After all, the yield is only 10 to 12 bags. That being the case, it is too much to ask for 5 bags, which will have another bad result. As the quantity that the landowner or the cultivator is allowed to keep with him for his use is not at all sufficient for him, he will have to go to the open market for getting his requirements. The rich people, who the Hon. Minister said could take advantage of the open market and buy their requirements, would buy large quantities in the open market and thus push up the prices. This will shoot up prices in the open market generally. That is why I say that we must have easy rates, whether it is of taxation or of levy. If only the Government reduce the burden on the producers and also make the rates of levy easy, they can hope for much better results. Otherwise, their purpose will be defeated.

" Sir, the Hon. Minister said that in regard to all these matters, there must be people's co-operation and confidence. I have absolutely no doubt that public co-operation is necessary and for my part I can say that I am quite willing to give my co-operation and confidence. But unfortunately it is only fifty per cent as there is no co-operation from the other side, I mean from the Government side. I am sorry to state that the Government have absolutely no sense of confidence in non-official agencies and in the Opposition.

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They don't want our co-operation. They do not believe in our statements. They think that people's complaints are exaggerated. Everything seems to be a hush-hush policy. Information is not given. Reports are not placed on the table of the House. Even to-day with regard to a very important matter—the report of the Technical Committee of the Planning Commission—the Hon. Public Works Minister was not prepared to state what exactly has happened in September 1951 and thereafter. He wants to keep us in the dark. That is the position and yet the Government want our co-operation. I would like to respectfully ask how they can expect our co-operation in the present state of affairs. Courtesies and co-operation are always mutual. We are ready to co-operate, because this is a matter relating to the food problem. But how can we co-operate with men who do not trust us, who do not have confidence in us and who have only a hush-hush policy? If this Government want public co-operation—whether it is with regard to control or decontrol, whether it is with regard to zonal system, or the irrigation projects which they have to take up for wiping out the food deficit or any other matter—they must believe the people and they must take the people into their confidence. Then only they can succeed in a democratic set-up. Otherwise, the democratic set-up itself will not work well and there is no use in the Government's blaming the Opposition Members."

* THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—" Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not think I shall deal in a concrete and detailed manner with the problems that have been debated here, because I believe my Colleague is much more competent to deal with them than I can ever try to do. He will deal with them in course of time. But I only wish to dwell on one particular aspect of the matter. Most of the speakers have complimented the Government on their policy of relaxation of controls. They have, I think, on the whole approved of this relaxation for which this Government was responsible. There have been complaints as to the consequences of such relaxation from hon. Members who spoke from the Opposition benches. Even there, the criticism of the Government's policy as to relaxation was not very strong and very clear. They seemed to approve of relaxation. They only desired more satisfactory results. Generally, so far as the House is concerned, I believe we have secured endorsement from the representatives, elected representatives of the people of this country, for the policy of relaxation which we have tried. Faults there are, defects there are certainly and disappointments too there are certainly! I for instance believed that the large producers of rice in Tanjore and other places would not take advantage of the relaxation, but would play fair. I am afraid that a large number of people began to help the shooting up of prices by making the best of their chances when they occurred. These are disappointments. But we cannot turn over from one policy to another in this modern world without having to bear with some of these consequences. A great deal of confusion has arisen, on account merely of words, in this connexion. Let me be precise. Confusion has arisen merely on account of the meaning of words. Some people in high places would like to call the policy, as one of control

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with a certain amount of relaxation. Other people would like to call it as a policy of decontrol with a certain amount of stringency and restriction. Whether it is restricted decontrol or relaxed control, the name does not matter. What we have to deal with is what exactly we have to live under, what system we have to live under. One is reminded in this country always of our old quarrels between the Advaitins and the Visishtadvaitins. Not much different from them is this dispute between relaxed control and restricted decontrol. I think, therefore, we had better not quarrel about words or about who wins or who loses. Whether it is the Advaitins or the Visishtadvaitins, it does not matter provided we are pious and provided we follow the laws of morality and act in fear of God. In the same manner, if only people acted properly—traders and producers—then there would be no difficulty, whether we call the system by the one name or the other. I have no doubt in my mind that in the long run, until we arrive at a state of mind in our country, when men will forget their own interests and think only of public and national interests, we must give an interest, to the man who produces, in the land. Until that good time arrives, we must provide a sufficient amount of interest in the land and the produce in order to see that men work hard and produce rice or wheat or millet.

“ Sir, in the last debate in this House on this important matter, Members pledged to the theories of socialism and of communism, vied with one another in pleading for the small peasant and his interests. What is the inference I draw from it? The inference that I draw from it is this. Even Members opposite who swear by communism and by a planned economy believe that we must give an interest in the land and the produce to the farmer, if we expect the farmer to produce more. And that is why I firmly believe, in spite of contrary opinions among my Friends as well as among others, that if we wish really to increase production of food in our country, we must allow the producer of the food a free market for what he produces and what he achieves by way of production. If we strangle him by restrictions and regulations which he cannot bear, if we make him walk about, like a prisoner or a thief, carrying his own produce in order to sell it surreptitiously, he cannot have an interest to produce food. Therefore, I think if we want to succeed in our policy of growing more food in our country, we must enable the farmer more and more, within limits of course, to feel that he is free, that what he produces is his own and that he can make the best of it. The more the restrictions we put the less will be his interest in production. The less the restrictions we put, the more will he be enthusiastic in doing work and producing more. In spite of giving him a loan for digging a well, a loan for buying cattle and a loan for buying manure and producing food, if ultimately we say that he has to give up what he has produced to the oppressive procurement officer, then what interest can he have in the production of food? Therefore, this Government will try, within the limits imposed by the general land policy of the Government, within the restrictions imposed upon us by the Central Government and those imposed by the integrated economy of the country, under which we have

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to live and under which we buy and import food from abroad, to pursue a policy which will ensure maximum food production. We cannot have a system of complete decontrol inside Madras and at the same time ask neighbouring States to procure and give us food. That is the problem we have to face. So, within the limits placed on us and within the restrictions imposed upon us by the necessity of the situation and by the policies followed by the Government at the Centre, we have, in my opinion, more and more to relax control so that we might create the initiative for production. That is the basic policy which I believe will help us. It is not theory, it is not an academical dispute between control and decontrol. It is really weighing out by expediency and forethought the amount of restriction that we should put on the producer and the amount of relaxation of control that should be given to the producer and the distributor. Even the distributor, the man who trades in these things, is not a mere Satan as some people imagine. He too does work. He finances before he can buy. He has to keep money and pay it to the farmer from whom ultimately he buys. He finances both production and distribution of food. Then there is transport. He has to transport the grains and be looking after the commodity. All this is involved in the business of wholesale and retail selling. Have we got warehouses to keep all the produce at one central place? No. We have to depend on the retailer and the wholesaler, who do partly the necessary work of production, distribution, warehousing and the like. They too will have to be given a certain amount of interest in their work. If we treat the trader as a blackguard from beginning to end and if we do not give him the freedom that he requires to put in hard work, we cannot make him do his work honestly or properly so that it is always a balancing between how much restriction we place on the man and how much freedom we give him. Therein lies statesmanship or administrative ability or good judgment or forethought. Mere views will not produce wisdom. We will have to act. It is easy to point out defects. It is easy to criticise. But it is difficult to know beforehand the defects and to order a policy and watch the consequences. It is easy to find fault. But finding fault is of two types. One is merely finding fault and the other is the "co-operation" that was referred to by Mr. T. Viswanatham. I am one with him entirely in what he said. I most cordially reciprocate his demand. I say all the co-operation that he desires will be given to him. Only we misunderstand sometimes each one of us what the other does. Sir, there is criticism that there is no co-operation forthcoming from us and that there is only secretiveness. Let me assure the House on behalf of the Government that I stand for no secretiveness. But where a duty is cast upon me to keep a paper or an object secret, I must fulfil my obligation. But in all these matters, my friends, Mr. Viswanatham and Mr. Ramamurthi and their colleagues ask for information. I am prepared to give any information on which no ban is placed by an external authority and this information will always be given to my friends. I am prepared, in some cases, even to hand over the whole of the so-called

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Secretariat files to the opposite side to look from A to Z and to understand everything. There will be complete co-operation on our part. But I think the misunderstandings must gradually dissolve and I am sure that Mr. Viswanatham will get all the co-operation that he wants. It need not be fifty per cent as he said. It may be cent per cent on both sides. Then there will be no difficulty. Sir, I have made my personal position in regard to the food policy perfectly clear. I hope shall not be misunderstood over the use of words, mere words, either one or the other.

“ Sir, Mr. Ramamurthi referred the other day to some past history in a different context which has some relevancy to-day. Let not Mr. Ramamurthi imagine that I believe in removing all controls. He referred to past history in 1946. He said I sailed with them when I was out of the Congress between 1942 and 1946. He called it by specific names, to which I do not attach much importance. On the contrary, let me tell him, it was the Communists that were on the right side at that time because Russia was in the War at that time. The Communists were believed to help the Government at that time. What I wanted then was not either Russia or the other. What I wanted was that we should not hand over the country, our country, to Japan. Therefore, I was at one with that party at the time. Therefore it was that I moved from place to place in spite of obloquy and the risk involved. I did not stop with mere words. I went about and preached my doctrine of opposing Japan. Of course, the Communist party was then led by Mr. P. C. Joshi. I am only sorry that he is not the leader of the party now. He was very helpful and very friendly to me. He was with me rather than I was with him or the Communists as was said by Mr. Ramamurthi. There was no necessity for me to go out for assistance from other parties. I was always in a perfectly safe position because I stood by what I felt was right. I had no fear about it. I had no shame about it. There was nothing wrong in my telling people what I believed to be right. Gandhiji understood it and Gandhiji's colleagues understood it. And that is why I was ready for co-operation with the Congress once the quarrel was over. That is why they were also ready for co-operation once the quarrel was over. It was not as if once I admired the Communists. As for admiration of the Communists, even now I admire the Soviet Government. There is no doubt about it. But I make a distinction between my Friends on the other side now and the Soviet Government in this matter regarding the admiration that I had for the Soviet Government. The hon. Member, Mr. Ramamurthi was saying that in my conversations with him, I praised Russian Communism. (Sri P. Ramamurthi: ‘No, no.’). Probably it might be, he referred to some speeches of mine. Much before that, a few years before that, when the War was going on, when Russia had won alongside of the Allies, at that time we were still working in the Congress Working Committee, I and my brothers there. Pandit Jahwarlal and myself were on the same Working Committee; at that time we drafted a resolution and both supported the resolution and in that we paid the highest compliments

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and expressed admiration for the Soviet Government. They had fought and won a most terrible war against the Germans at that time. That phase of the war was over. It was not only there in the speech referred to by the hon. Member, Mr. Ramamurthi, but even earlier I appreciated the strength of the Socialist doctrine. But the point now to be remembered is that that strength of the Soviet Government came out of previous liquidation. Its feature was liquidating all enemies to show strength and show solidarity and show progress. But in the process of liquidation, the violence that was necessary, and the crime that was necessary for producing that large effect, we do not want here. We do not want that liquidation. So there is great distinction between my admiration for the Russian war against Germany and the position that we have now to deal with namely, that we desire to progress that we desire to develop without any process of liquidation of any large group of people. Therefore we need not confuse one with the other.

“Hon. Member, Mr. Jeevanandam is not here I believe. He generally makes his speech and disappears. That seems to be his practice. It is also the same thing with hon. Member Mr. Muthiah Chettiar. Now hon. Member Mr. Jeevanandam quoted from Bharati the other day and said: ‘Here is your Bharati whom you worship, for whom you have built memorials, whose books you publish and all that. He said such and such a thing.’ Now let me tell hon. Friends, that poets are not debating society members or members of legislative bodies. Poets have many moods. Every poet must be of many moods. A certain critic writing about Tennyson said: ‘Poets are of many moods. Their poetry is like ‘shot silk’—that is to say they are like what we call ‘Anjur’ silk and ‘Meghavarnam’ silk saree (மேகவார்ணப்புடவை). If we look at it one way it shines a brilliant colour, if we look at it another way it shines a different colour, this way one colour, that way another colour, blue, violet, orange, green, red and so on. The poet’s mood is like that. ‘Shot silk’ called ‘Anjur’ in our own language is very beautiful when looked at from various angles. This shimmering variety of the colours of the rainbow, we can see in all poetry. Sometimes a poet sings in one language and sometimes in another language. Let us not forget, Bharati is no less appreciative of our own civilization and our own Vedanta. Let hon. Member Sri Jeevanandam turn over the volumes of Bharati’s poems. There he will find a lot to learn about our philosophy and Vedanta. If he only reads them properly he will give up the party to which he belongs just now.” (Laughter.)

SRI K. VINAYAKAM:—“He quoted from Tiruvalluvar.”

* THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—“He quoted first from Bharati. As for Tiruvalluvar he too was a poet. The shimmering colours are there in his poetry also. If only people know how to read Tiruvalluvar, if only they know to read Tiruvalluvar properly without previous bias and prejudice and not read Tiruvalluvar in order to find a quotation but read Tiruvalluvar to

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know and understand him, they will learn much and benefit much. There are two ways of studying, one to get what you want and sell the book afterwards and another is to read and understand it and become a better man. I wish everybody who knows Tamil reads Tiruvalluvar and becomes a discipline in the true sense. That is so much for quotations.

“The hon. Member Sri Ramamurthi referred with a certain amount of affection to my previous history. Let me also give him more than what he has tried to steal, so to say, from my speeches here and there. In the year 1930, I gave a series of talks in prison. At that time I explained appreciatively the system to which now the hon. Member Mr. Ramamurthi and others pay homage. But that was many years ago. Recently during the period referred to by Mr. Ramamurthi, in 1946, a Tamil book of mine was translated into English, with the unattractive name of ‘Vedanta.’ I wrote a preface to the translation. My hon. Friends on the other side may well quote it against me. I am not afraid of inconsistency. I am humble enough. I do not think I am a great man. But inconsistency is the hobgoblin of small men. Let me remind people of that truth which was expressed more than once by big people and repeated also by Gandhiji. But without pretending to be a great man, I am not frightened by inconsistency. I do not think there is anything inconsistent in development and change. The sucking babe is not inconsistent with the grown up young man who chews his food with all his teeth. The old man is not inconsistent with the young man. It is a process of evolution. I would, therefore, advise hon. Members on the other side not to be afraid of inconsistency but to come over, whenever they feel like it, to my side. (Laughter.) Let them not be afraid of it. Inconsistency is a sign of progress. It is a wrong term for changes that take place genuinely and honestly. Of course a liar could be discovered by inconsistency. But that is of a different kind as when we cross-examine a perjured witness, we find out the truth from his inconsistency. But a gradual, sincere and honest inconsistency is a sign of growth.

“I would request my hon. Friends to quote from what I have written deliberately on the very subject before us. That is my policy. It shows not only what I hold in common with hon. Friends on the other side but also shows the difference between the other side and me. I wrote these words in 1944 or 1945. But it was translated in 1946.

‘Planned co-operative economy is sought to be enforced in most civilised countries in place of profit motive, discarding the so-called civil liberty of private competition’—I call private competition a false civil liberty, it is only a make-belief—“But this is sought to be done without creating the necessary social culture therefore and depending on the coercive power of the state. But a change of this far-reaching character cannot be made with success by mere external authority however powerful. We must have a culture and generally accepted code of spiritual values which work as a law from within. Without such spiritual control mere material planning results in irrigation and must need culminate in widespread corruption and fraud. Vedanta and the ethic which follows from it and which is expanded and fully set out in the Bagavad Gita are pre-eminently fitted to serve as the spiritual basis for planned co-operative community life wherein every one must work according to capacity and receive according to need.

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'If men and women should work without aiming at personal profit and with an eye only to the welfare of the community, just this is the way of life taught in the Bhagavad-Gita.' 12-20 p.m.

This is the way of life the Communists here stand for and must stand for if they hope to build up the way of life they believe in.

'It lays emphasis on the equal dignity and sacredness of all labour that falls to one's lot, and on honest disinterested effort. Indeed the Gita lays down in a unique manner the socialist doctrine in terms of religion. The performance of one's allotted task, says the Gita, is nothing less than worship of God in the truest sense.

'Everywhere in the civilized world, men want a wise allotment of work to individuals as well as groups in accordance with demands of the general interest in place of *laissez faire*. We have had enough of the divine right to make private profit. If we want society to control individual life so as to produce this result, we cannot depend only on the spy and the policeman watching over citizens. We must build up a spiritual life which makes joy out of discharge of duty. We must bring into being a law that acts from within, making the execution of State imposed laws easy. In Vedanta we have a teaching rooted in immemorial tradition in India which can serve as the spiritual and cultural basis for a new and juster economy of life.'

"Sir, I shall not weary this House further with mixed matter. But I appeal to my Communists friends, to adopt a spiritual basis for Communist life. Only then will they succeed and not till then."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI:—"Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not propose to go into those matters that were raised by the Hon. Chief Minister during the course of this debate. I consider that they are extraneous to the subject-matter which we are at present discussing. I would also like to give my own views of the very Vedanta on which the Hon. Chief Minister has tried to base his arguments. Anyway that is not the subject-matter which we are discussing now.

"Sir, I am now concerned with the question of providing food for the 55 million people of this State and it is one of the most basic and important problems facing the people of this State to-day as it is facing the people of this entire country. First of all, I would like very strongly to place my protest against the manner in which the Government are treating this very important question. Policies are laid down, policies were laid down without any consultation whatsoever with the Members of this House and it required six long months for the Government to make up their minds to have a discussion on the new policy of decontrol undertaken by the Government. Sir, it might be said that there was the Budget debate and that food also formed part of the Budget and therefore we need not discuss it separately. I submit, Sir, that that is not the proper way of putting things. Of course, in the Budget debate so many subjects were discussed, but this basic question of food which requires concentrated attention could not be discussed in a Budget debate. Even to-day, when we are to discuss this basic question, the proposition that was moved by the Hon. Sri C. Subramaniam was 'that the Food Situation in the State be taken into consideration.' But while making his speech on the food situation, the Hon. Sri C. Subramaniam did not talk anything about the food situation as such,

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but gave a detailed account of the policy that was pursued by the Government during the last six months and sought to justify this policy on the basis of certain facts and figures. If anyone had listened to his speech, one would have to say that there is no famine in the country, not only in Rayalaseema but in vast areas of other districts also. It would appear as if things are somehow or other easy. The impression created is that we have achieved the purpose and of course there are some difficulties, but nonetheless they will adjust themselves in due course and everything will be all right. Therefore, when we have got to discuss the basic policy which concerns the millions of people of this State, it is natural for us to expect that the Government will give us sufficient time to discuss that policy alone so that the Government may be benefited by the collective discussion and evolve a policy based on such collective discussion by the Members of this House. I must say that even to-day the Government are not prepared to do it. Why? Of course, it is for the Government to explain. When 375 Members of this House have got to take part in a debate of this type, Member after Member is naturally concerned with describing the conditions in his particular constituency rather than taking part in a discussion of the basic policy pursued by the Government."

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" It is not our fault."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—" The fault of the Government was that they should have treated this basic question as a separate issue and that the entire food policy of the Government should have been allowed to be taken into consideration and lastly that sufficient time should have been allotted for discussion on the food policy so that Member after Member might contribute his best so that the Government might be benefited by the collective discussion. It was their fault that the Government did not choose to benefit by collective discussion. It does not concern us.

" Sir, it took six months for the Government to evolve the policy of decontrol. Much gusto was made about it. If I might be pardoned to say, there was also a sense of arrogance when Hon. Ministers talked about the food problem. I am glad that to-day that sense of arrogance and gusto are absent. Why are they absent to-day? But we shall not deal with it now. The Hon. Minister sought to defend the policy and the Hon. Chief Minister said that because of the fact that there was no concrete criticism made against the policy pursued by the Government, there was general acceptance of the policy from all sides of the House. I would like to submit, Sir, that there was criticism of policy, but the Members of this House did not get an opportunity to make a full, concrete and cogent criticism within the course of the 5 minutes allotted. To-day the Hon. Chief Minister sought to justify the policy on certain grounds. But I would only like to draw the attention of this House to how exactly the Government and the Members of the Government had been shifting their grounds from time to time. Were these grounds on which they sought to defend their policy the same as those when they started

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decontrol? Absolutely not. On the date this decontrol policy was announced over the radio, what were the expectations that were entertained as a result of this policy? When we judge the question whether this policy has succeeded or not, the main criterion is whether food has been made available to the vast millions of people of this State or whether it is a fact that more and more millions of people are to-day starving or are not able to get the food they so badly require. This is the criterion by means of which we can judge its success or otherwise. Sir, I would like to remind the Hon. Chief Minister what Mahatma Gandhi once said, that before hungry people God himself can appear only in the form of bread. 12-30 P.m.

“Whether our people, whether our hungry millions get their daily bread—that is our main criterion. That is the basis on which any policy of decontrol or control of food should be worked. The people should be in a position to purchase their rice requirements at the normal rate. What is it that we find to-day after six months of decontrol? Did the promise of the Hon. Chief Minister that prices would not increase abnormally, come true? What is the price at which rice is being sold in the open market to-day? Is it at the controlled price? No, surely not. We find people buying rice at Rs. 2 and Rs. 1-8-0 per measure. The Government now come and say that they are not responsible for the increase in the price of rice. What was it that the Hon. Chief Minister said while addressing a press conference just two days after the announcement of decontrol? He said, ‘I am sure the free market price will soon become very cheap and ultimately we may find it difficult to sell our rice in the fair price shops as we cannot reduce the price to that prevailing in the open market.’ That was their expectation. This was again and again reiterated by every Hon. Minister of the Government. They even stated that the Government would find it difficult to dispose of their stocks, because the open market rate would have come down very much in a few months after decontrol. This was the hope which they kindled in the millions of our people. ‘Price of rice is sure to come down’—that was their slogan immediately after decontrol. How glaring is the difference that we now find between the price of rice in the open market and in the fair price shops! What is the difference due to? Can the Hon. Chief Minister explain? Of course he has explained it. He now says that his old expectations about the good behaviour of the large number of landlords in Tanjore district had not been fulfilled. It required six long months for him to realize this fact. The same Hon. Chief Minister addressing a huge mass gathering in the Pachayappa’s grounds, just two weeks after decontrol said: ‘Some of the Communists may come and tell you that prices will increase after decontrol. But on’t you believe the Communists. After all it is not the Communists but the mirasdars who produce the food-grains we require most. These mirasdars come and tell me that prices are sure to come down. I believe the mirasdars. I do not believe the Communists.’ Well, that was what the Hon. Chief Minister said at that time. Has his expectation come true?

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What do we find now? What do the statistics which the Hon. Food Minister had been good enough to read yesterday reveal? The Hon. Food Minister had told us that the so-called increase in price of rice is all Communist propaganda and in reality no abnormal increase had taken place. Well, here are the realities. Here is the stark reality. What is the present price of rice obtaining in the open market and what is the controlled rate? Is there not a glaring difference between the two? Did the Communists utter a lie previously when they said that the price of rice will increase after decontrol? The Hon. Food Minister of the Central Government, Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, also told us: 'Oh, prices are sure to come down. As soon as the kuruvai harvest is over, we will have enough stocks. Prices will definitely fall afterwards'. Well, the kuruvai crop has had its harvest in September. It is three months since then. Have the prices fallen? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"Come to conclusions. Give practical suggestions as to how prices could be checked from rising high."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI:—"Yes, we shall give practical suggestions. But before that we have to tell what the Government have done in the matter and we have to point out their mistakes. That is why I requested that a full-dress debate on food should be allowed so that all Members could offer their suggestions. If not in this sitting, at least in the January sitting, let some time be allotted for a full discussion on the food problem."

"What happened after the kuruvai harvest? Did the price register any appreciable decrease? On the other hand it increased. Was it due to any Communist movement? What did the reports coming from Tanjore immediately after the kuruvai harvest show? What did the '*Hindu*' and the '*Indian Express*' say? What did their report show? Immediately after kuruvai harvest, the price of paddy which used to be sold previously at Rs. 23 or 24 per bag rose to Rs. 28 or Rs. 30? What did the Hon. Food Minister say while addressing a meeting of the Lakshimpuram Association just before the kuruvai harvest? He said: 'Don't be afraid; the price of rice will surely come down after the rice from the kuruvai harvest comes into the open market. The present increase in the price of rice is only a transitional one.' Three months have elapsed since that meeting. Has his promise come true? What did this decontrol policy of this Government achieve? It gave ample room for the large body of mirasdars to sell their produce to the common people at prohibitive rates. The whole policy had been based on false foundations. Therefore the specific expectation of the Government that prices are sure to come down after decontrol has not been fulfilled. People are now paying Rs. 2 per measure of rice whereas the controlled price is Re. 0-13-6? "

"When this is the stark reality, what is it that the Government say? They come in with some new excuses for the present increase in the price of rice? They have discovered some excuses."

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The Government have procured at the time decontrol was announced only about 7 lakhs of tons from the mirasdars. The available surplus with the landlords was only very little and therefore the prices went up quickly. I would like to ask the Hon. Food Minister whether he discovered the fact only to-day that the Government had procured 7 lakh of tons of rice before the decontrol policy was announced? Or if he had discovered it earlier, why did he give the false promise that prices will surely come down? Secondly, the Government say: 'After all only in surplus areas do we find a small increase in the price of rice. Prices in the deficit areas have not gone up very high? And, we are also told now that the price of rice in the deficit areas has gone up only to the extent of the black-market rate at the time of control. I do not know how many officers the Government deputed to get statistics of black-market price of rice in the deficit areas. I do not know how many records are now kept registering the increases in the price of black-market rice when control was in force. We know full well that the Government was not competent enough to check black-marketing in rice. When such is the case, how can we believe their statement that the prices have increased in the deficit areas only to the extent of the price of black-market rice at the time of control. The other day the Hon. Food Minister was giving us some figures with regard to the rise in the price of rice. Sir, this is what appeared in 'the Hindu'. That is what the Hon. Food Minister was referring to in the Chittoor district.

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'There has been a steady increase in the prices of all foodgrains during the last fortnight. *Swarnawari* paddy, the harvest of which has almost been concluded, was sold at Rs. 25 a bag at the time of the commencement of the harvest. Now it is being sold at Rs. 35 a bag.'

Now, Sir, the black-market rate which was quoted by the Hon. Food Minister amounted to Rs. 30 a bag. To-day it has gone up far beyond that. In the South Arcot district, which is a deficit district, to-day, the price of rice is Re. 1-8-0 per measure. In Tiruchirappalli district it is Re. 1-4-0 per measure. I can give similar figures for the other districts also. Take the Tirunelveli district; there too, it is sold at the same rate. Now, Sir, all these districts are not surplus districts. The prevailing price to-day is Re. 1-6-0; whereas before decontrol the black-market price was only Re. 1-2-0. Does the Hon. Food Minister know what the price was in his own district of Coimbatore before decontrol and what it is to-day. To-day it is Rs. 1-10-0 per measure in his own district. He can never say that this was the black-market price in his district before decontrol. I know what the price of rice was in 1944-45. Sir, the point I want to make is that for purposes of comparison the criterion is not to compare the present price with the black-market price just before decontrol, but with the price that prevailed just before controls were introduced. Now why was price controlled and fixed at a particular rate? Because the Government wanted to make rice available to the people at a price they could afford to pay. So, for purposes of comparison we should be told to compare the present price with the price which prevailed just before controls were introduced and not with the

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black-market price which prevailed when controls were in force. Therefore, Sir, when the Government ask us to compare the present price with the black-market price, they are not discharging their responsibility as a Government. Now, I make this specific charge chiefly against the Hon. Food Minister, because he has asked us to compare the prices in that way, and also against the Chief Minister. I will even make this charge against the Prime Minister of India. For, he has said that prices in Madras State had already gone below the controlled price and that was why the Madras Government had adopted this policy of decontrol.

“ Then, Sir, another argument that was made to-day was with reference to the statistics of food production. They have a tale to tell of their own. The tale that they tell us to-day is entirely different from the tale the Hon. Minister would like to have. Sir, before the war, the average food production of this State ran up to 81 lakhs of tons. I am taking the figure from the publication of the Economic Adviser to the Government. This figure includes both rice and millets. I am taking this figure as the amount required for the consumption of the people after making due allowances for seeds and other things. It was stated at that time that this amount was not sufficient to meet the requirements of this State; and there was a deficit of 5 lakhs of tons. So, Sir, taking the two figures together we may say that the normal requirements of this State is 86 lakhs of tons of foodgrains. Now this is the position taken up by the Economic Adviser to the Government. Now, on the basis of these statistics we find that the normal requirements of this State is 86 lakhs of tons of foodgrains and there was a deficit of 5 lakhs of tons. Sir, according to statistics the population of this State is, say, five and a half crores. During the war period it has increased by $17\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Then, making an allowance for the fact that children under three years would not require rice for consumption we may say that our food requirements compared to the pre-war period has now gone up by 14 per cent which comes to roughly about one-seventh of pre-war period consumption. So, Sir, the deficit which was already there to the tune of five lakhs has increased by an addition of twelve lakhs, and so, the total deficit comes to 17 lakh tons.

“ Now, let me consider what the position is with regard to production. During the last few years the average production per annum was 60 lakhs of tons of rice and 21.2 lakhs of tons of millets. What is expected this year is far far less. According to the statistics given to us by the Hon. Food Minister it is 17 lakhs of tons less than the average production during the pre-war years. That is, our total requirements fall short by 35 lakhs of tons. Our total requirements come to 98 lakhs of tons but our expectations are only 64 lakhs of tons, and so there is a deficit of 34 lakhs of tons. Now we are told that the law of demand and supply will operate. The demand is 98 lakhs of tons and the supply is 64 lakhs. Now how will the law of demand and supply operate? The law of demand and supply is that when the demand is great and the supply is less, or, I shall put it this way, when the demand is far in excess

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of the supply prices of commodities are bound to increase. This is the law of demand and supply as per the political economists. Now the Hon. Food Minister wants us to believe that that will not happen. He has entirely reformulated the law of demand and supply. He has said that the greater the demand and less the supply the less will be the price. How this will happen I personally do not know. If this theory is accepted, the Hon. Food Minister would get a place among the classical economists like Adam Smith and Ricardo; and posterity will give him a place along with them for this wonderful theory put forward by him!

" Now, Sir, what is it that is going to be done to prevent an increase in prices. We are told to compare the present price with the price ruling in 1947-48, and we are told that after all, prices have not increased. I ask, what was the position in 1947-48. Are we to forget all those factors which prevailed then and which have happened since then? During the interval between that period and to-day, how much havoc has taken place and how much have the people been impoverished. All these things should be considered. Can we forget what happened in 1952, just before decontrol was introduced, when there was a fall in the price of agricultural commodities, in the price of cotton when there was one of the biggest slumps in the country. So, Sir, when you want to compare the present with that period you should take into consideration all those attendant factors. If you bear in mind all these factors and then make the comparison you will see that the prices ruling at present are beyond the capacity of the ordinary people.

" When you make a comparison, have you not got to take into consideration all the attendant factors and see how much the price has increased in relation to the other agricultural commodities that are produced in this State? If you do so, then you will realize that the rise in price during this period is certainly a very heavy one, one beyond the capacity of the ordinary people. Member after Member from either side of the House who participated in this debate has demanded more fair-price shops. What is the significance of that demand? After all, the policy of decontrol of the Government is accepted; and yet, why is it that Member after Member both from the Congress and other benches should demand that more fair-price shops should be opened? The meaning of that demand obviously is that unless rice is made available and other foodstuffs also are made available to the people at control and conscionable rates, the people will have to starve. Already we know that starvation is prevalent in vast tracts of our State. But, this fact is being shut out from our eyes, and we are being told that the decontrol policy has succeeded wonderfully. Anyway, Sir, this is not how I understand statistics.

" Again, Sir, it was stated that 7½ lakh tons of paddy and other foodgrains were procured at the time decontrol was introduced and therefore the prices increased. Now, take the statistics furnished by the Finance Minister himself. The expectation for the next

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year is about $6\frac{1}{2}$ lakh tons less than what was procured in 1950-51, —about $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakh of tons of rice and about 3 lakh of tons of millets I think—and we are told that this compares favourably with the total amount procured in the year 1951-52. Even though the Government may not procure that much, the total available surplus in 1952-53 with the producers is going to be probably the same amount as they had procured at the time decontrol was introduced. So, if we are going to be in the same position as we were in at the time decontrol was introduced, what is the guarantee that the landlords or the producers will not behave in the same way as they did during the past six months? How are the people going to be protected against an increase in prices? To that, Sir, there is no answer. “Leave things to themselves; somehow or other, they will adjust themselves”—that is what we are told specifically again and again. Let us not forget the fact that it is precisely because of the fact that the total amount of food produced in our State has been going down year after year that the Government themselves were compelled to reduce their ration commitments from time to time. The quantity of ration allowed to the people was reduced from 1 lb. to 12 oz., then to 10 oz., then again to 8 oz. and 6 oz., and finally it was increased to 7 oz. Why was it that the rice content of the ration was reduced in 1951 to 6 oz? It was because the total amount of rice produced was less by nearly 40 lakhs of tons. After decontrol came, has that production increased? No; the same amount was there. And yet we are told that the prices were expected to be the same. Similarly, we could not increase the rice content of the ration, and yet we are told it is a correct economic theory.

“Sir, having said all this, I would like to point out that the Government are not laying down any guarantee that in the future at least rice and other foodstuffs will be made available to the people at rates at which they can buy. That is why I say that in vast tracts of our State, hunger and starvation are the order of the day. For instance, is food available in Palni and other taluks of the Madurai district, or again in the South Arcot district, to the common people? Is it or is it not a fact that hundreds and thousands of people are moving from their homes to new areas? Sir, I have seen some villages in the Palni and Dindigul taluks. I went to a village and I saw the whole hamlet was deserted except for two old huts; and in those huts two old women were living. When I went and knocked at the door and called for them, they won't come out because they had no clothing. And this is the position in village after village in vast areas of our State. When that is the position, how are these people going to get food at these unconscionable prices? There is no answer to that.”

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“Do you want the answer even now?”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“No answer came when the Hon. Minister spoke.”

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THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“ I gave only facts ; and it is only after hearing the criticisms that I could speak about them. I gave out the factual position, so that hon. Members may understand the correct state of things.”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ I know no answer is likely to come. If the Minister promises now that in spite of these things, food will be made available to people at 10 annas a measure or at the control rates, certainly we shall test that promise once again as we have tested the promise made at the time of decontrol. I may say at once that unless the present policy is changed, even the promise now made that the prices will come down or will be reduced, will go the same way as the promises that were made at the time of decontrol. I can specifically say that.

“ Again, why was this policy of decontrol adopted? It was adopted despite the fact that the Draft Five-Year Plan by which the entire Congress swore, stated that we cannot have any kind of decontrol to-day. They made it absolutely clear. They said—

‘ The equitable distribution of foodgrains among different sections of the population at reasonable prices has been an object of policy in recent years. The effective discharge of this responsibility is Government’s first duty in the economic field. In determining the food policy, therefore, there is no room for any proposal or experiment which detracts from this responsibility or exposes the economy to uncertainty.’

I am not very much enamoured of the Five-Year plan ; but certain fundamental formulations they have made there with regard to the food policy, and I agree with them. They say that it is the primary responsibility of any civilized Government to see that food is made available and distributed equitably among all sections of the people, particularly among the poorer sections of the people. Any Government which claims to be civilized must see to it that food is equitably distributed among all sections of the people. They add—

‘ The view is sometimes expressed that while complete decontrol of food may not be possible, the essential object of food policy can be secured if only the principal towns are rationed with the help of imported supplies and free movement is established throughout the country, so that supplies may move quickly to all non-rationed areas.’

And meeting all these arguments, they say that conditions at present are not favourable to the continued smooth functioning of the food market in grains”

MR. SPEAKER :—“ The hon. Member seems to be quoting at length. If he wants, he may quote here and there.”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ ‘ So long as shortages continue, it will be possible for traders . . . to charge exorbitant prices from the needy people.’ I submit that this is the Five-Year Plan on the basis of which the Congress fought the elections.”

MR. SPEAKER :—“ The hon. Member may continue his speech after lunch.”

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[After lunch—3 p.m.]

MR. SPEAKER :—“ Mr. Ramamurthi will continue his speech.”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ Mr. Speaker, Sir, this morning, I was referring to the fact that the hopes that were held out to the people were not fulfilled. It was not with a view to score a point against the Ministry or to point out that the forecast by the Ministry was a failure and the specific forecast that we made at the time decontrol was ordered proved correct. That was not our intention. In what way has this policy worked; whom does it benefit? Having regard to the results of that policy the question arises if that policy should continue or we should seek some other method of ensuring the food of the people. That is what we are concerned with. It is well-known, Sir, that at the time when decontrol was introduced, the bulk of procurement had already taken place from the small producer and whatever was left was mainly with the big landowner. The Hon. the Food Minister made it clear yesterday and he admitted that it was always the case that the big landlords managed to escape procurement and with this stock they managed to blackmarket even during the time when there was both control and full procurement. It is these people, these big people that were able to loot the people,—I use that expression specifically—and make enormous profits out of the blood and toil of the people, the starving people of the State. Should we now continue that policy or should we think of something else? That is the main question to which we should devote our attention. As I pointed out to the House, there is no prospect at all of the Government being able to supply food to the people at reasonable rates with their present policy. The food stocks with the Government are being rapidly depleted and by the time the season ends, there will be practically nothing left with the Government. As far as the existing fair price shops are concerned, reports are reaching us to the effect that even the existing fair price shops are being closed down. In one taluk of Cuddapah alone our report says that out of 43 fair price shops, during the last three or four months, 40 have been closed down and only three are functioning. Even with regard to the functioning of the existing fair price shops, no better certificate regarding them need be given than the certificate given by the Prime Minister of India when he was touring the district of Anantapur. He is reported to have said when he was asked to inspect a fair price shop in Anantapur : ‘ Do not talk of fair price shops. Simply having half a dozen bags of foodgrains in the fair price shops, you cannot say, that the people are buying their foodgrains there. It is all a farce.’ No better certificate is needed.”

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—“ I am sorry, Sir, that Mr. Ramamurthi does not know the temperament of the Prime Minister in a matter such as this. When he is asked for an unnecessary engagement, he says : ‘ There is nothing wonderful

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in a fair price shop; a fair price shop is a fair price shop and why do you want me to go there.' These remarks cannot be made out as a sort of evidence about how the administration is going on.'

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI:—"The Prime Minister knows English and what he was saying. The Prime Minister did not say: 'There is nothing wonderful about these fair price shops.' This is the specific sentence that he is reported to have said: 'It is a farce'. If you just . . ."

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"If Sri Ramamurthi knows the Prime Minister's circumspection, he will not say so; the Prime Minister will not make a remark about the administration of an institution which he refused to inspect."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI:—"We know our Prime Minister and I have also known our Prime Minister and that is that truth comes out when he is angry; when in an angry mood, he blurts out the truth in spite of the best of desire to be diplomatic. This we know of our Prime Minister. Anyway, I will not dwell on that question now. My question now is what is going to happen with the depleted stocks with the Government and a procurement of about 2 lakhs of tons which will not be sufficient for any long period of time. Even these existing shops will get closed down which means that at the end of the year, the entire people of the State will be left to the mercy of the big landlords of the State. What is the guarantee that the big landlords will behave better in future and what is the guarantee that they will not mulct the people, that they will not charge exorbitant prices and in that way fleece the people of the State? That is one aspect of the question. The second question is: What about the procurement policy adopted by the Government? We know that it is the primary responsibility of the Government to feed the people. Obviously if the Government have got to discharge that responsibility, the question of procuring stocks is very important. Unless the Government procure stocks and have sufficient stocks at their disposal, they cannot feed the people. Regarding the present levy system, might I ask if it will satisfy the requirements of the State and will it enable the Government to discharge their primary responsibility? The main question before us is whether the two lakhs of tons to be got by the levy system and the two lakhs to be imported from abroad, will satisfy the requirements of the people. I say, Sir, that the Government will not be able to discharge their primary responsibility. The levy system, apart from certain inherent defects in it, cannot meet the requirements of the people. I will come to the defects later on. If sufficient stocks for the purpose of feeding the people are to be procured, I say, Sir, that the surplus stocks with the big landlords have got to be procured and for that obviously different methods will have to be used. Certainly I am all for exempting people with small holdings and the limit up to which the exemption will apply can certainly be discussed and settled. There is no difficulty about it. But I do not understand why the big landlords should in their greed be permitted to fleece

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the people? Why should not the Government procure everything that they have in their stocks over and above their requirements? We can leave the small man with about 20 or 25 acres free but above that, I submit, Sir, the entire available stock be it from the individual landlord, or math or religious institution, should be procured and should be made available to the people. Without that, I am afraid the Government will not be able to discharge their responsibility to the people.

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“ With regard to the present levy system, it is obviously different from the old procurement system of the previous years? I know in the past a good amount of paddy stored by the big landlords were not actually procured. That should not be allowed to happen now. But the Government say that people's co-operation is needed in this connexion. How they are going to get the co-operation of the people is a different matter. We, on our part, are certainly prepared to co-operate with the Government if they are going to procure paddy from the rich landlords who have stored them up. But if they are to leave the rich landlords and fleece the common people, we are certainly going to fight it out. That is the specific issue. We will certainly struggle with the people in fighting the mirasdars who have stored up paddy and are keeping the poor people hungry.”

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—“ Struggle ! ”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ Yes, struggle. The Hon. Chief Minister may not like that word. But nonetheless the struggle to get their daily bread has been going on between the poor people and the rich landlords for the past seven years. The landlord does not like to give up. The people are there to fight it out. That is why due to the existence of these two tendencies the struggle had always been there. Therefore, I say, that, unless the Government accept their prime responsibility to feed all the people of this State, this vexed question of food cannot be solved.

“ I shall now come to the present levy system. I shall speak with reference to Tanjore district. Other Hon. Members may talk about other districts. I say that this levy system makes an invidious distinction. For example, take the fertile taluks of Papanasam, Kumbakonam and Thirukkattupalli. All these taluks are well-known for their fertility. What is the levy proposed therein? Five bags per acre. On the other hand, take the dry taluks. Take the Nagappattinam taluk. The waram or kuttakai there per acre will amount to 18 kalams. What is the levy here? The same five bags, i.e., 10 kalams. If you take 10 kalams out of 18 kalams what is it that the poor cultivator will have for his sustenance? Take the Papanasam taluk which as I said is noted for its fertility. There the yield per acre is 45 kalams. There also you have the same procurement levy. The landlord has got to surrender only the same 5 bags per acre. The landlord can do anything he likes with the remaining 35 kalams. Why is this invidious distinction? I do not know. If it is the policy of Government to procure as much as possible from the rich mirasdars, we, the people, are here

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to co-operate with them. But surely not when they propose such a levy as the present one. Why can't they evolve a policy by which the surplus left over with the rich mirasdars could be stored in their godowns, so that they may have ready stocks on hand and rush forth with supplies when there is scarcity and when there is a rise in the price-level? I say that this levy ought to differ in the fertile taluks. At the same time, I do not want that the surplus paddy in a district should be allowed to go out of it. In the same district, there are dry areas also. Let the Government procure the maximum in the fertile areas, store it up in the district itself so that it may act as a reserve. By this they can check any sudden increase in price level also by rushing forth supplies from their stores. Unless the Government do this, no useful purpose could be served by the proposed levy.

“ When the people are not able to get the food they want at reasonable prices and when the prices are not checked from going on increasing, what is it that we find the Government saying? The Hon. Chief Minister comes and justifies the Government's stand on decontrol on an entirely different footing. All sorts of excuses are brought forth. But the same old cry is there of increasing production and giving the necessary incentive to the *producer* to increase production. The Hon. Chief Minister has been a bit careful in his definition of the term ‘producer’. First he said ‘producer’ and then he changed the producer to a ‘farmer’. What is the definition of the term ‘producer’? According to the definition of the word ‘producer’ which the Government have put upon it, even Sri V. C. Palanisami Gounder is a producer though he is a big landlord. Well, that may be the Government's definition. But we believe that the man who actually cultivates is the producer.”

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—“ Not the man who borrows money for his manure, I suppose! ”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ Certainly the man who borrows money for his cultivation is the man who cultivates and it is he who toils hard to till the soil. The man who is the tiller of the soil is the producer. That is how we base our definition of the term ‘producer’. We do not recognize people like Sri V. C. Palaniswami Gounder as producers.”

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—“ Sri Palanisami Gounder, his tenants and farmers—all are producers.”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ The Hon. Chief Minister may put such an interpretation. He is at liberty to do so. But we on our part refuse to recognize such people as producers. We recognise the tillers of the soil as producers. The actual tiller of the soil—he is the man whom we have got to look to for our food. What incentive should he be given to produce more? That is the main question. What is the incentive that this Government has given to the small producer to increase production? Nothing tangible. The small producer is overburdened with debt. He is

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not in a position to buy manure to increase the fertility of the land. For each and everything he has got to approach the landlord and be at his mercy. The Government refuse to give him loans because he has no security and he may not be able to pay interest. That is the position now. Unless radical agrarian reforms take place, production cannot be increased. Production has been going down ever since 1920. It had not gone down after the War (1939-1945). If we see the statistics of the Economic Adviser to the Government of Madras, we see that production has been continuously deteriorating from 1942. At any rate in 1942 we had no control. Then what is the reason for the decline in production? It is not from 1942 that production is declining. It has been declining from the twenties. Even the Congress at its Lucknow session during 1936 said that the decrease in production was due to the poverty of the masses. They attributed the decrease in production to agrarian tensions. They said that unless and until we introduce radical agrarian reforms, we cannot hope to increase our production. So, we see that agrarian reform had been the issue from the thirties. What have this Government done in the matter? What are the agrarian reforms they had introduced? What is the position of the cultivator now? How does he stand? Has he got enough money with him to buy manures for increasing the fertility of the land? No. He is not in a position to find the wherewithal to meet his agricultural needs. Unless his condition is improved all empty talk of increasing production will be of no avail. That is what history has taught us. Our Hon. Chief Minister may not like any talk about foreign countries. But at any rate let us take the case of our sister country, China.

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“ For the last hundreds of years that country had been importing foodgrains for its internal needs. This went on till the last agrarian movement set in. In that movement the ownership of land was changed. The tiller of the soil was made the owner of the soil. Then there was a great incentive for the tillers to produce more foodgrains. In one year with an improvement in the technique of cultivation that country was able to produce more than they required for their internal needs; they were also able to export rice to other countries. Now that is the position in China to-day. Now if the same thing is done in our country it will not take long for us to produce foodgrains for our requirements, and also enough to spare.

“ Lastly, Sir, why is it, in spite of the fact that the Planning Commission Report, on which the Congress contested the last general elections, has stated in categorical terms that they are not for relaxing controls—I ask, why is it in this State this Government have adopted a decontrol policy? I say, there is a solid political motive behind that move. Has it not been now realized that decontrol has failed? Have we not seen that it is not to the interests of the people to have such a policy? Have we not seen from our six months' experience of decontrol that prices have not come down? Is it not a patent fact now that we have no stock on hand for the next year? Now, Sir, in spite of all this, how do

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Government justify their decontrol policy? The only reason is, as I said, that they have a solid political objective behind it. In this State the Congress did not win in the last elections. They thought that it was all due to the tremendous amount of corruption and bribery rampant in the Food Department and the harassment by the procurement officials of the poor peasants and agriculturists. We all know what a great uproar there was in the State and what amount of discontent there was among the people just before the elections. Sir, the Congress itself in 1946 complained of the vast extent of bribery and corruption in the Food Department in the days of British administration, and the Congress Government itself during its regime of five years has failed to rid the administration of bribery and corruption. Their regime is a confession of failure on their part to purge the bribery and corruption that was rampant in the Food Department. So the only way open for them was to put an end to the administration of control run by the officials and change the hearts of the people. So they abolished controls. But, I say, introduce a new system of controls in which the people will play their fullest part and not the officials. That sort of control will work well and successfully, and not a system of control in which the officials will look down on the people and have their own way. Instead of doing that this Government have decontrolled. In doing so they thought that the people will be freed from all the trouble they had undergone under control and so they would support this Government; and it is with this intention the Government have introduced decontrol in this State. I do not believe the Hon. Chief Minister, knowing him as I do, ever believed that by merely acting in accordance with the wish of the people, by respecting the sentiments of the landowners he could increase production in the country and bring down the price of foodgrains. I know the Hon. Chief Minister did not have faith in the landowners. He knew the landowners would misbehave; he knew they would store grains and sell them in blackmarket; because I have seen this statement made earlier when he was Governor-General. So under this context he knew that the landlords will hoard foodgrains and the merchants also will hoard foodgrains. And nothing has happened between 1948 and now to change the character of the landlords. But all the same why is it the Government have adopted a policy of decontrol? I say it is political objective. I say, give up all this decontrol. I say in all humility the interests of the people are involved in this question. Even to-day the interests of millions of our people are involved in this question. Government cannot solve this problem by their decontrol policy. Government cannot supply food to them by the policy they have adopted. Let them take a lesson from the experience of the last six months of decontrol. So even now let us examine the question afresh; let us sit together and let us fully consider the problem; let us discuss in all seriousness; let us not discuss by allowing only five minutes to each member."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The Leader of the Opposition has been given sufficient time, though the other Members have been given only five minutes each."

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THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—“ All the five minutes were stored to give the leader of the Opposition one hour and twenty minutes.” (Laughter.)

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ Now let us seriously consider this problem; as I said, let us sit together and discuss the matter.”

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—“ In spite of all this, two blades will not grow where one blade grew.” (Laughter.)

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ Government to-day are impervious to all arguments. If we sit together and discuss things on the basis of figures, if we discuss them dispassionately and not from the point of view of propaganda, Government will surely come to a different conclusion regarding decontrol. If the mind is impervious it will fail to come to a correct conclusion. If the mind is prejudiced or if it is predetermined on account of political factors, it will not change its opinion.

“ Lastly, Sir, unless we are prepared to discuss and give a reorientation to our food policy posterity will judge Government otherwise; posterity will say that this Government allowed millions of our people to die, that this Government failed to discharge the elementary responsibility of a Government in giving food to the people, that they allowed the landowners to hoard foodgrains and left the people to the mercy of blackmarketers. So let us not be misjudged. So let us at least now change our policy and respond to the call of the people; let us not be misled by the landowners who so to say, produce food for us; food, which is now in their grip merely because they have got monopoly over the land in this State. Therefore I say, let us discuss and give a reorientation to our food policy for the lasting benefit of thousands and millions of our starving people.”

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“ Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been closely following the debate for the last two days because the subject is important. Speeches were made under two broad categories, one category approving the general policy of the Government and at the same time, pointing out defects here and there, which have to be rectified; and a second category delivered by the Leader of the Opposition saying that we have taken a wrong policy, that we should go back upon that policy and reintroduce controls. These are the two main categories. If we analyse them and see who are the advocates of this second category, we find it is only the members of the Communist Party, who have taken up that attitude. Even the members who have been behind the Front called the United Democratic Front—the fast disintegrating United Democratic Front—have not spoken with one voice. No doubt the Communist Party members have spoken with one voice; but the other members have in general approved the policy of decontrol. Of course they have pointed out certain defects in the administration and they want those things to be rectified. But, they are not for the reintroduction of controls.

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“ Therefore, let me first meet the points made out by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition because he was the main spokesman for the reintroduction of controls. Sir, the first point he made out was that the Government have taken six months to initiate a debate on this food problem. At the outset, even when I initiated this debate, I said that this is a debate on food as such for the first time. If it was considered that our policy had to be discussed in this House, and food being an all important thing, it was not only the duty of the Government to initiate a debate but, if it was thought that we were evading any such debate on the floor of this House, it was the duty of the Opposition also to take every opportunity to bring it before this House and focus its attention on that aspect. After all, there was the general debate on the Budget and the Food Department also had a Demand to make and the Opposition could have focussed our attention particularly on this aspect during that debate. But they were not prepared for a debate at that time and therefore they did not try to have any debate in the House on this aspect. We formulated the policy of decontrol and we found that there was general agreement as far as this House was concerned, leave alone the people outside. As far as this House was concerned there was a majority of opinion on our side and we, therefore, thought that it was unnecessary to bring a specific resolution on this policy. If the Opposition thought that we were following a wrong track it was the duty of the Opposition to have brought in a motion at the proper time and if it had been so especially in respect of food which is an all important thing, it was their duty to bring in even a motion of censure and draw the attention of the House and also of the people outside to this aspect. They would not do it, Sir, but would charge the Government now that they did not give an opportunity for a discussion on this subject. After all, in this House, the Opposition members have also got the initiative with them. They could have done it if they had only wanted it.

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“ The second charge that was made was that a resolution has been brought by the Government to discuss in general the food situation in the State and there was therefore no particular opportunity to discuss the food policy followed by the Government. Sir, I again state that we still hold that there is majority agreement as far as this food policy is concerned. If it was thought it was necessary to concentrate discussion on this policy aspect, it was open to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition to bring in an amendment saying that the Opposition disapprove the policy followed by the Government and certainly attention would have been focussed on it. But, he would not do any such thing. I mentioned to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition, even at the beginning of the debate that if we were to allow a debate on general lines, each hon. Member will be interested in his particular constituency and it would be better as far as possible if they could give some guidance to Government on general policy as well. He cannot deny it. He only said ‘ No, no. Leave it as it is. Each member is particularly interested in his constituency. Let them speak on their constituencies. As

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far as I am concerned, I will deal with the general policy.' This is the statement that he made and, even if he had made a wrong judgment at the time, during the debate he could have corrected them and asked the Members who took part in the debate to confine themselves to the general policy alone. After all, it was unnecessary for everybody to speak. From the Opposition side many names had been given to the Hon. the Speaker. They could have restricted the number and said 'Let us concentrate upon the food policy'. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition would do no such thing but would blame the Government for bringing a resolution in this general form. About 150 hon. Members had given their names and they have got to be satisfied. Necessarily the time had to be restricted but the hon. the Leader of the Opposition would make a general charge during his speech that sufficient time had not been given. He has taken more than an hour and twenty minutes and, if he is representing the view points of his party, I do not think that a speech from any other hon. Member is necessary from his party. Even in this respect, I am afraid, he was on wrong ground when he charged the Government that the proceedings in this House has become infructuous and therefore it has become a little unreal. I will now deal with the other points raised by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition.

"The first point that he wanted to make was that there has been a decrease in the production of foodgrains. Did I, Sir, conceal that fact? I was always prepared to give all the facts and figures but still he would speak—that is his tactics—as if we were trying to hide something and he was exposing it here. That is his policy which I want to bring to the notice of the hon. Members here. I gave all the facts and figures and showed, as a matter of fact, that there has been a decrease in production and with facts and figures explained how it has been going down step by step from 1942-43. But his speech looked as if he was making a new point out of it.

"The second point he wanted to make out was that the gap of the deficit has increased. I myself said, Sir, that the gap has increased due to the decrease in production and also due to the increase in population but the hon. the Leader of the Opposition would make it appear that I wanted to mask these figures to side-track this issue. As a matter of fact, I had put the facts straight to the House and put a straight question to the House 'These are the facts and what do you want the Government to do?'

"Another point that he made out was that prices have gone up. Yes, the prices have no doubt gone up and I gave to the House figures relating to the extent they have gone up in the various areas. We have also got to consider the question as to how prices do go up. In this connection he pointed out the promises made by the Hon. the Chief Minister and also by me in the broadcast speech and also on public platforms that prices would go down. Yes, I thought so at that time and to that extent my expectations have not been fulfilled. The prices have not gone down but I know they have gone

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up. Leaving aside the promises and other things made by us, we have to analyse and find out the causes which have brought about an increase in the price level instead of simply saying that decontrol has brought about this increase in prices. Supposing we had not reversed the policy of controls and had not announced this policy of decontrol, would there have been no scarcity? We could have gone on with the stocks in our hands and, in fact, we are continuing to supply through the fair price shops—only the name has been changed from ration shops—at the same rates and almost at the same prices. What else has been done during this period leaving alone the policy for the future to which I will come later? The policy announced by us has not made any change as far as the supply position is concerned. I think, if we go into the figures, it will be found that we have been supplying to the people greater quantity of foodgrains than during the corresponding periods of last year. In September 1951, which month is always the peak period, we have supplied only 71 thousand tons through the ration shops whereas this year for the same period we have supplied 91 thousand tons through the fair price shops. As far as supply through fair price shops is concerned we have not in any way diminished it. On the other hand we have been supplying a little more than what we have been supplying before in the previous years and we have now opened more fair price shops. Therefore, the supply through Governmental agency has not in any way been affected. Then, what is the change that has been made? Formerly, there were the restrictions on movement from place to place and even from house to house. Even within the same town persons taking a measure of rice used to be prosecuted. We said 'Leave alone whatever surplus is available with the people. Let them have free movement and a free market.' Formerly, when there was no such freedom the surplus that was available with the people was being sold in the black-market. Even the quantities that we used to procure are now with them and whatever surplus is available they can now sell in the free market. If I compare the blackmarket price with the free-market price, I am quite justified in saying that the free market price has not reached the level of blackmarket prices. Under the same conditions of supply through Governmental agency and under the same conditions in which we procured seven lakh tons last year when there were restrictions and there was no freedom, the prices were at a very high level, but when we have given this freedom of movement within the zones, if, as a matter of fact, prices have not come down, we are asked 'Why did you say to the people that prices would go down?' I would request the hon. Members also to ponder upon it. The price level has got a psychological factor behind it. If we create a scare in any market that such and such goods are not going to be available hereafter, the prices go up. People create a scare and there is a rise in prices. That is the psychology behind it.

“As a matter of fact, we wanted to create a psychology wherein people will have confidence and it is such confidence that would

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bring down prices. But, what were the hon. Leader of the Opposition and those belonging to his party doing? When we were trying to administer the psychology dose to people, they were saying from every platform 'No, no, prices are going up, prices are soaring high and therefore be careful.' Therefore, we were creating a psychological atmosphere in the country for the fall in prices. The Hon. Chief Minister said, the merchants and traders did not behave well. They also did not behave well and the members belonging to the Communist Party were also equally responsible, indirectly responsible, because they were all along saying that the prices were going to rise, prices were going to soar high and scarcity conditions were going to prevail. As the Hon. Chief Minister was telling, it is just like a doctor telling a patient 'Oh! you are all right, you are getting on all right, have confidence' and just then another man coming and saying 'Oh! you are becoming weak' and another person coming forward and saying 'Oh! your heart is collapsing.' What will be the condition of such a patient and who is the better doctor, you should be able to understand. If I have made promises and given assurances, on what basis did I make them? As I said, Sir, we wanted to create a psychological atmosphere and psychological confidence in the country and every attempt was made to create that atmosphere of confidence. Then, Sir, why did I make the statement that the prices would go down? I made the statement because of this. I hoped—and in that also I was disappointed—that we would have the normal south-west monsoon and north-east monsoon, that the period of drought would be over and that we would have a period of prosperity, especially in view of the affluent rains that we had in May last. That was what we thought. But, unfortunately, the south-west monsoon was a phenomenal failure and an unprecedented failure, as I have already pointed out. Therefore, there was no production—millet crop failed, kuru-vai crop failed and every other crop failed—and when there was no production at all, prices went up. I expected the south-west monsoon and therefore there would be good production and when there was good production, paddy and other millets would be available in abundance and therefore prices were likely to go down. If I have been defeated by Nature—not by members of the Communist Party—if the Communist Party want to take credit that they are responsible for the failure of the south-west monsoon, let them take credit for that. But, Sir, that has been the main factor for the prices going up a little further. After all, we should understand, that as soon as the monsoon fails, a few persons who have got a little surplus, keep it for the future and do not release it and when the rain comes, even though they do not get foodgrains immediately and they have to wait for two or three months, it creates confidence in the people and so whatever surplus they have, they are prepared to sell it in the open market. So, automatically prices come down. That is the aspect of the question that should be borne in mind. This year, the north-east monsoon was late in arriving and that further accentuated scarcity conditions. So, Sir, taking all these things into consideration—failure of the south-west

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monsoon, and the late arrival of the north-east monsoon—even now I claim that the prices have fared fair. When I make such a claim, the Leader of the Opposition says, I do not have political honesty. But, admitting that I have made wrong promises, after all there is no question of making false promises—we expected certain things to happen and then gave out an estimate of the situation—if anything really had gone wrong, we have to analyse and see what is really the matter. May I respectfully submit that but for the unprecedented failure of both the monsoons, even now I am prepared to say that the prices would have gone down, because there would have been abundant production of foodstuffs, especially in view of decontrol of food?

“ Then, Sir, I have pointed out from the figures for the years from 1942–43 to 1951–52 that 1944–45 was the peak period and that step by step production was going down. As I have already pointed out, one of the factors which contributed to this was the drought conditions. The second factor was, as pointed out by Mr. V. V. Ramaswami Nadar, people who were previously growing food crops have now taken to the growing of commercial crops, because they got more money from commercial crops and rather than produce food grains and undergo all the ordeal of procurement and the harassment of procurement officials, people who were growing foodgrains went over to commercial crops because they were more profitable and there was no harassment also. Therefore, that also contributed to scarcity conditions in food. Therefore, when we decontrolled, we thought that there would be normal monsoons, there would be increased production and therefore when there is increased production, automatically the law of supply and demand will operate and the prices would go down. That was the main factor which induced me to forecast a fall in prices. But, my friend opposite attributes it to political dishonesty. Sir, as I said, I have placed all the facts before the House and it is not as if I have said anything in secret that the prices would go down. In fact, I made a public statement and now publicly say that the prices have gone up and there is nothing wrong in admitting what has happened.

“ Sir, another point that was made out was that famine conditions have come to prevail throughout the State. After all if famine conditions prevail, they do prevail and the Government themselves have realised that famine conditions prevail. Otherwise, where is the need for opening as many as 2,000 and odd gruel centres? We admit there are drought conditions; we admit that production has gone down. What is the remedy? There is no use writing in papers about starvation deaths and so on, and even though they are due to natural causes, my friends write letters that there have been starvation deaths. They would never admit that they have made wrong statements even though after enquiry we tell them that they were not deaths due to starvation. This propaganda of starvation deaths would naturally create further scare among the people and conditions will go on worsening and worsening.

“ I submit, Sir, that in these difficult famine conditions, what is wanted most is to keep up the morale of the people. If the

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morale of the people goes down, they would not be able to tide over the difficult position. If my friends are really interested in the millions of people, they should really be interested in creating a certain amount of confidence in the people instead of trying to shatter the confidence of the people and every moment telling them 'here are starvation deaths, millions of people are going to die', because if such a statement is made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition, it is not likely to create confidence in the people. In spite of such statements which the hon. Leader of the Opposition usually makes, namely 'millions of people are going to die', I say, it is not going to happen and it shall not happen.

"Then, Sir, Mr. Jeevanandam was referring to the beggar problem in the State. He said that everywhere there were more beggars under Rajaji Raj. Sir, I know there are more beggars and it is because of the fact that the monsoons have failed and we are a poverty-stricken State and the reserve power of the people is gone, many people are forced to take to begging. Unfortunately, we do not have slave camps as in Siberia where we can segregate all the beggars, so that they may be kept away from us. If we have slave camps as in Siberia, we would take away all the beggars and segregate them there and say 'we have no beggars here'. Unfortunately or shall I say fortunately we cannot resort to that practice and that is why we have to face the problem. As the Hon. Chief Minister has pointed out, it is not a nuisance; it is a problem which has got to be faced by the State Government and we shall try to face it and solve it as far as possible with the co-operation of this House. Sir, these are the facts as far as the past is concerned.

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"Sir, while I initiated the debate, I thought I should give only a factual picture so that this House may approach the problem without any inhibitions and without any sort of suggestions from us. Under the present circumstances, what are we to do? The remedy suggested by Mr. Ramamurthi is to bring back control. If this House gives the verdict that control should be reintroduced, I am prepared to stand by it as far as I am personally concerned. I would request Mr. Ramamurthi to stand by the verdict of the people's representatives."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI:—"Not the old control."

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM:—"I know he will camouflage by saying that he does not want the old control but that he wants some new control. We have got to work with the human material which is available to us.

✓ "If he is not satisfied with the verdict of this House and if he so desires, I am prepared to take the verdict of the people on the issue of control *versus* decontrol. I am sure about what the verdict of the people will be. Decontrol has been received warmly in every nook and corner of the State."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI:—"I accept that challenge."

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* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“ I know he does not lose anything by accepting that challenge.”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ Let the Hon. Food Minister resign, I will also resign and let us see.”

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“ To-day I will offer my resignation”

MR. SPEAKER :—“ I cannot allow this kind of interruption.”
(Sri P. Ramamurthi rose to speak.)

MR. SPEAKER :—“ If the hon. Member wants to speak, I will permit him afterwards.”

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“ I am sorry I cannot speak in the Communist language, in which ‘ people ’ means only Mr. Ramamurthi and his followers and nobody else.”

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ People means Kunniyur Sambasiva Iyers! ”

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI :—“ All the difference between an old man like me and my young Colleague! ”
(Laughter.)

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“ If the hon. Leader of the Opposition thinks that we are following a wrong policy and if he is not prepared to take the verdict of this House, let him bring forward at the next sitting a resolution recommending the reversal of that policy. I, as the Leader of the House, promise that I shall give top priority to it and allow as many days for its discussion as it is necessary.”

(Interruption by the Hon. Sri C. Rajagopalachari.)

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—“ The offer has been overruled by the Hon. Chief Minister.”

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—“ It is not overruled by him. My offer still stands.

“ I am glad that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition says that he wants the re-introduction of controls. I wish he has the courage of conviction and the honesty to proclaim it to the people everywhere without masking it in any way by using words like ‘ old control ’ and ‘ new control ’. If he does this, he knows what sort of reception he will be getting from the people. He tried to make political propaganda by saying that our decontrol policy had failed. It is for the House to judge whether the policy has failed. I leave it at that.

“ The question was asked as to how we would feed the people when there was so much deficit. Especially Mr. Jeevanandam asked it. Mr. Ramamurthi, his leader, repeated it and added that I should be placed in the museum along with Adam Smith and some other economists. I think that was the insinuation. Anyway, my

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note of optimism is based on certain facts. I am optimistic because I have faith in the people that they will produce more, making use of every ounce of water now available in the tanks. It is long since the districts of North Arcot, South Arcot and Chingleput have had a good shower and had their tanks full. Fortunately, at present most of the tanks are full or nearly full. There is enough water for at least one crop. When the tanks are full, the wells nearby also have adequate water. Let me give figures about the acreage under tank irrigation in these three districts.

	District.	Extent. ACRES.
North Arcot		1,14,584
South Arcot		1,49,000
Chingleput		3,13,186
		5,76,770

I am sure that at least one crop can be raised on these 575,000 acres, even if there is no further rain."

SRI S. DEIVASIGAMANY :—" What about the loss that the agriculturists have already incurred? "

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Nobody is going to compensate them for the loss. If the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is prepared to make up the loss, I have no objection. If he suggests ways and means, I am prepared to consider them.

" I expect that all these 575,000 acres will go into production. We are making arrangements through the Agricultural Department for the supply of seeds. The extent under well irrigation in these three districts is 410,000 acres and I expect they also will go into production. If these one million acres produce one short-term paddy crop and one millet crop, we will have an additional four lakh tons of foodgrains even at the most conservative estimate.

" I want to bring one other factor to the notice of the hon. Members. Two important irrigation projects which we are executing are nearing completion. The Lower Bhavani Project will bring two lakh acres under irrigation. Our Engineers have promised that water could be let out from the Tungabhadra Project by June, and that will bring another three lakh acres under irrigation. Thus the two projects bring another five lakh acres under irrigation.

" With these 15 lakh acres going into production with adequate water available, I feel that we will be able to tide over the crisis. That is why I am optimistic. Some people do not like our saying that we will be able to tide over the crisis. Their wish is that the crisis should not be tided over and that there should be perpetual difficulty so that they can make use of it for political purposes.

" In my opening speech, I gave figures about the quantity that we proposed to import. We will get 2 lakh tons of rice at a fairly cheap price, another 50,000 tons if we are prepared to pay a little

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higher price, five lakh tons of millet and two lakh tons of wheat. We are making arrangements for the supply of broken wheat to the people. A Daily of Madras has commented that the people will be inclined to take broken wheat if supplied. From imports alone, we will have nine lakh tons of foodgrains and we are going to procure two lakh tons of rice from the surplus districts of the State. Thus we will have 11 lakh tons of foodgrains in all. We have been distributing through fair price shops and ration shops all these years only 9½ lakh tons. As against that, we will have 11 lakh tons and we will be able to distribute them to all people on the same scale as before through fair price shops. But I have to make it clear that the entire quota of supply will not be in the form of rice; some portion of it will have to be in the form of millets and wheat. 4 p.m.

That is why I laid some emphasis on the change of our food habits. In this connexion I want to say that Dr. K. B. Menon made a very valuable contribution to this debate—leaving aside all the irrelevancies. (Interruption.) I say he left the irrelevancies to other hon. Members. (Laughter.) He confined himself only to food and nothing but food. I have made a note of this. He made the important contribution to the debate by saying that our food habits were not born with us but were created also. He said that grains alone should not be our food, and that subsidiary foods like fish should be produced more and more. He was saying that in Malabar there were plenty of tanks and each home had a tank where fish could be reared. Therefore, we have to concentrate not only on grains but also on raising other subsidiary foods. Taking all these into consideration, as far as next year is concerned, even though it is going to be a difficult period, I am sure, we will be able to tide over the crisis. All these factors are the basis for my optimism, and not anything else. (Interruption.) Imports from other places will come. That will be the responsibility of the Central Government. We have got to see that conditions are created so that more and more production not only in grains but in subsidiary foods also is made possible. The problem facing us now is how we are going to produce more food. If, as a matter of fact, it will be possible to produce more by the re-imposition of controls, certainly I will be the first to re-introduce controls. I am sure controls will not yield two blades of grass where one previously grew. On the other hand, they will retard the production of food. This is the verdict of the people also. Very many hon. Members of this House also had said so. That being so, I do not think that the solution of the problem lies in re-introducing controls. (Interruption.) I can understand the attitude of the Leader of the Opposition. His philosophy of life leads not only to control of food but it leads to the control of every human activity, culture, etc. (Interruption.) Pandit Nehru talks about control of food, but the Leader of the Opposition and the party to which he belongs are wedded to control not only of food articles but control of every production, every human activity, every human thought, every culture, etc. That being so, I am not surprised . . . (Interruption by the hon. Member Sri Ramamurthi) if he wants at least these controls if not the other controls. It is his faith and it is quite understandable.

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But the question is whether the House will accept his advice for more effective and stringent control. More stringent control will only retard production. That is my honest opinion. If the House thinks otherwise, I am prepared to take its verdict.

“ Regarding certain areas in the various constituencies, pointed attention was drawn to pockets of scarcity areas, and the prevailing distress among the people. I do agree that there has been a certain amount of difficulty. The main difficulty is our deficit. It is just like our trying to cover our body with a cloth which is not quite sufficient. When we try to cover our head, our feet are exposed, and when we try to cover our feet, our head is exposed. But we are trying to do the best of a bad job. After all, facts speak with greater emphasis than mere arguments. We have been passing through a very difficult period. Famine has been raging in the country. In spite of the allegations of starvation deaths—even taking that there had been starvation deaths, the number of deaths did not exceed 100—we have been able to tide over the crisis to a certain extent. There had been no starvation deaths on any large scale. On investigation we found out that allegations of starvation deaths were all false. Even taking these starvation deaths to be true, for argument's sake, their number is not more than 100 and considering the size of the country, the poverty and the deficit in foodgrains in the State, this number is nothing. In these drought conditions even if one soul dies, it would be bad enough. But we cannot help it. Because of these difficulties, people have been put to great strain. Foodgrains were not available to them in sufficient quantities. As I already told the House we try to improve the position so that food may be available to our people in sufficient quantities. Our attempt should be on the production side. In that behalf the hon. Member Mr. Viswanatham has made certain suggestions that we have not paid sufficient attention to projects like Krishna, Godavari, etc. I know they deserve attention so that at least after five years the benefit of those schemes will be available to our people. But people cannot wait for five years to satisfy their hunger. They cannot live with their stomachs empty in the hope of getting benefit after five years. We have got to see that sufficient food is available to them now to carry on. I do not know when we will have conditions wherein we will have plenty. I will be quite satisfied if the target figure of 1945-46 and 1946-47, namely, 5 million tons of paddy and 3½ million tons of millets is reached. We will be more than satisfied with this amount of foodgrains because we have been getting on fairly well with much less. We should see how we can get these quantities. After all the economic set up in 1945-46 has not changed now. It was not under a different economic set up from now that a higher rate of production was obtained in 1945-46. The present landholders were existing even then. The hon. Member Mr. Viswanatham wants that we should reach the target of 10 million tons. But I would be satisfied with 8½ million tons. In the present economic set up and under the existing conditions, our main difficulty is want of rain. Let us all

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hope that hereafter we will have rain year after year, and that every year will be a normal year. It would then be possible to reach this target easily. For that purpose, we should see that our farmers, whose reserve power has been shaken to a great extent because of the drought conditions for the last five years, are helped. They need our help. I am sure the department will go to their help in respect of their seed and manure requirements. I am sure with this help we will be able to increase our production. It will not be possible for me to take each district separately and deal with the conditions existing therein. Ramanathapuram district was brought out prominently by some hon. Members. They say that it is not only the Rayalaseema districts that are suffering but Ramanathapuram district also is suffering equally, if not more. They wanted at once relief measures to be taken in Ramanathapuram. No doubt, famine conditions are also connected with the food problem. But they are a little bit different. It is no use mixing up the two in this debate.

“ We have taken note of the requests and representations made with reference to various districts and, wherever possible, we will try to help the people. We have already started relief works. As Finance Minister, I have to bring to the notice of this House that, even with the existing famine relief measures, the deficit will go up to Rs. 10 crores. Therefore, if these relief measures are to be extended to other areas also, that means more money and this House should be prepared to vote it, if it becomes necessary.

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“ One word about the levy system to which the hon. the Leader of the Opposition referred. He said, ‘ Let us take away the entire surplus, beyond a certain level.’ But, Sir, representations were made to us that the big landlords had leased out their lands, they would be getting only a share of the produce by way of rent and this levy would absorb almost the entire surplus, and they have got their own commitments. But I am prepared to say that, if it is possible to get more from the big landlords, certainly I would not hesitate to do it, if it becomes necessary. But representations have been made even from the other side of the House that the target already fixed is fairly high and that it is likely to create some difficulty even for the big landlords. From that aspect, we have got to see whether it will be possible to take anything more from these big landlords. There is no use simply saying that we are at the mercy of big landlords. It is not so. As far as the delta areas are concerned, we are absorbing almost the entire surplus, by this levy system. Still, my own view is that a little more may be left with them. As far as small peasants are concerned, after all, they form the majority and they are not touched. As I have already pointed out in my speech on the Land Revenue (Surcharge) Bill, in Tanjore district we should be able to procure as much as possible from landlords paying an assessment of over Rs. 100. Let us leave alone those who pay above Rs. 20 and below Rs. 100. Even then, there are only 86 per cent of the pattadars who pay an assessment over Rs. 100. Therefore, there is no use

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saying that we are in the grip of big landlords. Of course, for political purposes anything may be said. But the majority of landholders are small landowners. No doubt, there are people who own greater extents of land. But that is a different problem. We will tackle it by and by. As far as small peasants are concerned, under the existing conditions it will be possible and it should be possible for them to grow more, because ours is a State of small landowners. Under these circumstances, I am sure that the conditions, which the hon. the Leader of the Opposition said were required for growing more food, are already existing in the agricultural sector. My submission to the hon. Members who have moved amendments is that we shall try to remove the difficulties pointed out by them with reference to particular areas, and I request them to withdraw their amendments.

"Before I conclude, I have to answer one point with regard to Malabar. It was reported in the editorial of *The Mail* that one hon. Member Sri Nambiyar, when he spoke, said that rice was selling at Rs. 5 per measure in Malabar. I do not know whether his speech has been rightly reported or wrongly reported."

SRI T. C. NARAYANA NAMBIAR :—"I said that rice was selling at Rs. 5 per para (not per measure) in Malabar."

* THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—"I do not know what is a para. Whatever it may be, the entire editorial was written on the basis that rice was selling at Rs. 5 per measure in Malabar, and we have been sacked and condemned on that ground. I wish they take a little more care before writing the editorial."

"Sir, this allegation was made in the editorial of an important daily. So, I tried to get certain figures with regard to Malabar. After all, the situation is not so alarming as it was described to be even by the hon. Member here. I have here extracts taken from the *Mathrubhumi*. At Kozhikode, on 19th November 1952, a bag of ordinary sort of rice containing 162 lb. (that is, about 48 Madras measures) was selling at Rs. 52 and a bag of polished (first-class) rice was selling at Rs. 58. On 26th November 1952, the prices came down to Rs. 49 and Rs. 56, respectively. On 1st December 1952, they further came down to Rs. 48 and Rs. 50, respectively. On 5th December 1952, they went up a little to Rs. 50 and Rs. 52, respectively. This is the report of the *Mathrubhumi* about prices at Kozhikode. In regard to prices in other places, I have tried to get some figures. At Parali, the price of paddy per 70 paras (a cart-load), which was Rs. 225 went up to Rs. 240 on 5th December 1952. This is certainly not a rise of Rs. 5 per para. At Ottapalam, the price went up on 5th December 1952 from Rs. 210 to Rs. 250. At Balusseri (a suburb of Kozhikode) the price at the fair price depot was As. 5-1 whereas the price in the open market was As. 5-9. In view of this, there is no use getting alarmed about these things. As far as Malabar is concerned, we have taken special precautions and we are giving special treatment to Malabar and the Nilgiris. Whatever is wanted by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition to be done is being done there. Rationing and

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ration shops are continued there. Therefore, there is no use trying to say that even in Malabar, prices have gone up. On the whole, I am prepared to say decontrol has worked fairly well, though not to the extent I expected, which was because of the failure of the monsoon and not because of any other thing. I am sure there is absolutely no case for the reversal of our policy. That is my claim. Thank you, Sir."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI :—" On a point of personal explanation, Sir. The Hon. the Food Minister stated that I was trying to palm off the statistics he had given as my own and trying to mislead the people. I submit that a perusal of the transcript of my speech will not bear him out. On the other hand, I have specifically stated, on the basis of the facts supplied by the Hon. the Food Minister himself, that his policy stands condemned. There was no intention on my part to palm off his statistics as my own. I relied upon the statistics given by the Government."

SRI T. C. NARAYANA NAMBIAR :—" Sir, in my speech yesterday I made it clear that the price had increased five times in some areas and ten times in some other areas. I stick to my statement that the price of paddy per para is Rs. 5 in Malabar."

MR. SPEAKER :—" I shall put the amendments to the vote of the House. The hon. Member Sri P. Venkatasiviah is not in his place. If an hon. Member is not in his place, his amendment is deemed to be withdrawn. So, the amendment of Sri Venkatasiviah is deemed to be withdrawn."

SRI S. VEMIAH :—" In view of the assurances given by the Hon. the Food Minister, I beg leave to withdraw my amendment."

The amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

SRI T. LAKSHMINARAYANA REDDI :—" I press my amendment, Sir."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The question is—

'Add the following at the end:—

"with special reference to the failure of the Government to meet the food situation in Penukonda and Kadiri taluks, Anantapur district." "

The amendment was lost.

SRI K. RAJAGOPALA RAO :—" నేను పెట్టినట్లుంటి ప్రతిపాదనలను మంత్రిగారు శ్రద్ధతోనుకొని తగువైన చర్య తీసుకొంటారనే ఉద్దేశ్యముతో నేను నా సవరణను ఉపసంహరించుకొంటున్నాను. "

The amendment was, by leave, withdrawn.

SRI D. SEETHARAMIAH :—" I press my amendment, Sir."

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MR. SPEAKER :—“ The question is—

‘ Add the following at the end :—

“ with special reference to the famine conditions in Rayalaseema.” ’ ’ ’

The amendment was lost.

SRI A. GOVINDASWAMI NAYAGAR :—“ உணவு மந்திரி அவர்கள் எங்கள் ஜில்லாவிற்குப் போதுமான நிவாரணக் கடைகள் திறப்பதாகவும், போதுமான உணவு அளிப்பதாகவும் வாக்குறுதி அளித்தால் நான் என்னுடைய திருத்தத்தை வாபஸ் பெறத் தயாராக இருக்கிறேன். இல்லாத பட்சத்தில் வாபஸ் வாங்கமாட்டேன்.”

MR. SPEAKER :—“ The question is—

‘ Add the following at the end :—

“ with reference to the failure of Government to open sufficient number of fair price shops and supply adequate food-grains in South Arcot district.” ’ ’ ’

The amendment was lost.

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MR. SPEAKER :—“ Hon. Members Sri V. Sri Krishna, Sri V. Chidanandam, Sri G. Rama Rao, Sri Alluri Venkatarama Raju, Sri P. K. Gopalakrishnan, Sri G. Satyanarayana, Sri M. Kune Rao and Sri N. Sivarami Reddi are not in their places and the amendments moved by them are deemed to have been withdrawn.”

The amendment of Janab K. Uppi was, by leave, withdrawn.

SRI M. LAKSHMANASWAMY :—“ Withdraw చేసుకోవడం లేదండి.”

MR. SPEAKER :—“ Then I will put his amendment to the vote of the House. The question is—

‘ Add the following at the end :—

“ after decontrol and the negligence of the Government in opening fair price shops forthwith and in not getting the price of paddy and rice to the level of the controlled prices and in view of the unsatisfactory levy procurement order of the Government, dated 19th November 1952.” ’ ’ ’

The amendment was lost.

SRI C. PULLA REDDI :—“ Withdraw చేయడం లేదండి.”

MR. SPEAKER :—“ The question is—

‘ Add the following at the end :—

“ in general with special reference to famine conditions in Kurnool district.” ’ ’ ’

The amendment was lost.

SRI P. NARASIMHA REDDI :—“ Withdraw చేసుకోవడం లేదండి.”

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MR. SPEAKER:—" I shall now put the amendment of hon. Member Sri Narasimha Reddi to the vote of the House. The question is—

'Add the following at the end :—

" with special reference to famine conditions and hunger deaths in Cuddapah and Chittoor districts." ' ' ' "

The amendment was lost.

SRI G. C. KONDAYYA :—" Sir, I am withdrawing my amendment in the hope that the Government will do something to the people who are suffering in the famine-stricken areas."

The amendment of hon. Member Sri G. C. Kondayya was, by leave, withdrawn.

SRI K. RAMIAH CHOWDARY :—" మంత్రిగారు నేను పెట్టిన సవరణలను దృష్టినించి శ్రద్ధ తీసుకొని తగుచర్య తీసుకుంటారని ఆశిస్తూ, నా సవరణను ఉపసంహరించుకొంటున్నాను. "

The amendment of hon. Member Sri K. Ramiah Chowdary was, by leave, withdrawn.

SRI K. KRISHNA RAO :—" Sir, I am not withdrawing my amendment."

MR. SPEAKER :—" Then, the question is—

'Add the following at the end :—

" and particularly about the closure of fair price shops in Nellore taluk and the supply of boiled rice to Nellore Town fair price shops at abnormally high rates." ' ' ' "

The amendment was lost.

SRI T. C. NARAYANA NAMBIAR :—" I am not withdrawing my amendment."

MR. SPEAKER :—" The question is—

'Add the following at the end :—

" with special reference to the failure on the part of the Government to open gruel centres and to apply Famine Code in Malabar since the food situation is serious and famine is spreading and even starvation deaths are taking place." ' ' ' "

The amendment was lost.

SRI K. GOVINDA RAO :—" విశాఖపట్టణం, శ్రీకాకుళం, తిల్లూరు కర్నూలు ప్రాంతాలలో ప్రకటించుతానని మంత్రిగారు హామీయిచ్చే, నేను నా సవరణను withdraw చేసుకుంటాను లేకపోతే, నేను withdraw చేసుకోను. "

MR. SPEAKER :—" The question is—

'Add the following at the end :—

" with special reference to the distress prevailing in Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts." ' ' ' "

The amendment was lost.

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MR. SPEAKER:—"I am now going to put the original motion to the vote of the House."

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI:—"Sir, I would like to have clarification on this point. The resolution before the House is, 'That the food situation in the State be taken into consideration'. That being the case, I don't think any vote is necessary on the resolution, as it stands in the present form."

MR. SPEAKER:—"All motions must be put to the vote of the House. That is the procedure to be followed. The question is—

'That the food situation in the State be taken into consideration.'"

The motion was carried.

IV.—MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

MR. SPEAKER:—"I have to announce to the House that I have received the following message, dated the 11th December 1952, from the Hon. the Chairman, Madras Legislative Council:—

'I transmit a copy of the Madras Motor Vehicles (Taxation of Passengers and Goods) Bill, 1952 (L.A. Bill No. 21 of 1952), as agreed to by the Council without any recommendation and signed by me.'"

V.—STATEMENT *RE* THE KRISHNA ANICUT ENQUIRY COMMITTEE REPORT.

MR. SPEAKER:—"Regarding the Krishna Anicut Enquiry Committee's report, the Hon. Minister for Public Works will make a statement and the debate on the same will be held in the next sitting."

THE HON. SRI M. A. MANICKAVELU NAICKER:—"Sir, I think the idea is that the motion on the situation created by the cyclone is to be taken up first."

MR. SPEAKER:—"The Hon. Minister for Public Works will now make a statement on the Krishna Anicut Enquiry Committee Report and it will be discussed in the next sitting of the House."

SRI T. VISWANATHAM:—"Sir, we are very anxious that the matter should be gone into even now. That is what we feel after reading the report and also the appendices, which I have had the advantage of looking into yesterday and to-day. I would rather like that the debate should go on to-day unless everybody agrees that it should be postponed."

MR. SPEAKER:—"Yes, that is the agreement."

SRI T. VISWANATHAM:—"Then in that case it seems that unfortunately I am the only man to disagree on this point."